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Eminem's Bad Rap? · Richard Kim

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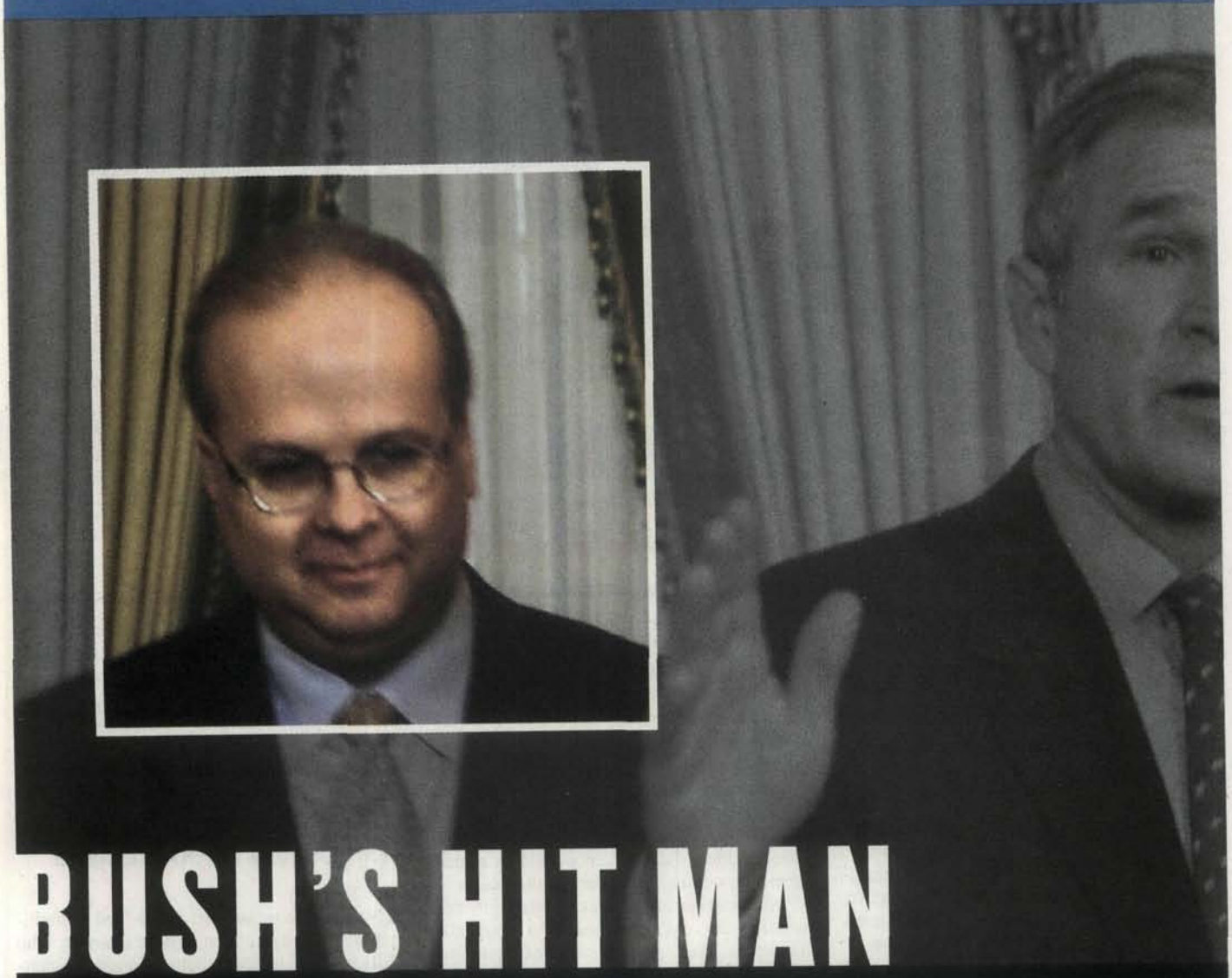

BUSH'S HIT MAN

KARL ROVE AND THE POLITICS OF DESTRUCTION

VAGINAL POLITICS
Katha Pollitt

A NEW THIRD WAY
Kahlenberg & Teixeira

'FAITHLESS'
Gene Santoro

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STEVE BRODNER

LETTERS

THE SUITES & THE SWEATS

New York City

■ In "Economists vs. Students" [Feb. 12], Liza Featherstone and Doug Henwood cheer on students who demand that garments bearing their college's logo be made under decent conditions. The students are right. These garments cost enough to enable employers to pay wages sufficient to meet the basic needs of their workers. Indeed, the economic argument is stronger than the one the authors present. Better-paid, better-educated, healthy workers are more productive, more likely to stay longer and produce better-quality products that benefit the bottom line.

Unfortunately this article, lauding people who fight to improve the plight of workers, misrepresents a code of conduct with the same goals and an effective implementation record: SA8000, the Social Accountability International standard for decent working conditions, and its independent verification system. This information is readily available on SAI's website, www.sa-intl.org.

(1) SA8000 is not led by multinationals. Half the SA8000 advisory board is composed of public interest organizations and trade unions from around the world. These include Amnesty International, trade unions representing 25 million workers (many in the developing world), the National Child Labor Committee, the Maquila Solidarity Network and the comptroller of New York City. Professor Jagdish Bhagwati did once serve on the SA8000 advisory board but does not currently.

(2) Audits of certified factories are by no means "sporadic." On the contrary, they are scheduled at regular six-month intervals. SA8000 auditors are highly trained. Furthermore, the training is and will continue to be regularly evaluated and improved. Far from being superficial, the SA8000 audits require an unusual depth of investigation and worker interviews. Public reports are an SA8000 requirement.

(3) The SA8000 factory cited in the article, where auditors did get bamboozled by a management cover-up, had its certification suspended in a fraction of the time it takes for legal remedies, at zero cost to those who brought the complaint. The loss of its certificate puts it at high risk of losing at least one of its largest customers, so it is under considerable pressure to reform. The certification body that issued the SA8000 certificate has been required to significantly improve its audit procedures. This is prima facie evidence of a system that works.

(4) China is, indeed, "not a friendly environment for independent union organizing," since the right to organize is severely restricted by law, and civil society is virtually nonexistent—and often violently repressed—there. Rates for limbs lost to industrial accidents in parts of China are appallingly high, just one indicator of the cost to workers. Yet 70 percent of toys are made in China, as well as dominant portions of garment manufacture. The 1.2 billion people of China deserve a genuine effort to improve their lot. Where freedom of association is prohibited by law, SA8000 states that employers must provide "parallel means" for free association, such as: a worker-elected SA8000 representative and committees for health and safety, wage negotiations, literacy and complaints and resolutions.

In a world with much exploitation by employers, those who are ardently seeking to change working conditions for the better should work together rather than snipe at one another.

ALICE TEPPER MARLIN, *president*
Social Accountability International

FEATHERSTONE & HENWOOD REPLY

New York City

■ Nowhere do we say that SAI is "led by multinationals"; we quote an outside observer who calls it a "PR tool for multinationals," a characterization repeated by many sources. Watching Alice Tepper Marlin fawn over a Toys 'R' Us exec at the SAI conference this past December lent considerable credence to this view. On the advisory board, business members outnumber labor members by more than two to one (not counting the New York City comptroller, who manages one of the world's largest stock portfolios).

Inspections every six months sounds reassuring, but scheduled at predictable intervals and announced in advance, they're unlikely to expose abuses. Snap visits would be much more effective. We're happy to hear that the offending factory eventually lost its certification, but it's troubling that it got approved in the first place; auditors are supposed to see through managers' attempts at bamboozlement. SAI's auditor on the scene, Det Norske Veritas, told

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*Cover photo by AP/Wide World, design by Open; illustrations by Steven Brodner, Stephen Conway; photos by John Stennes/*Grand Forks Herald*, Bettman/Corbis*

EDITORIALS

Power Lines

As George W. Bush so fuzzily put it, "The California crunch really is the result of not enough power-generating plants and then not enough power to power the power of generating plants." Whatever that means, his main responses to California's deregulation crisis have been to tout drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and to bar federal intervention that would curb the profiteering by big generating companies.

Since a tiny percent of the nation's electricity is produced by burning oil, drilling in the refuge is irrelevant to the problem. But, of course, it's quite relevant to the big oil and gas companies' expectations of a payoff from this Administration, in which they had invested millions in campaign contributions. They're salivating for exploration on hitherto off-limits federal lands with ANWR as the opening wedge. Bush plays along by fanning fears of power crises nationwide to overcome the pro-environment sentiment among voters. (Recent polls show that two-thirds of Americans favor a ban on drilling in the wildlife refuge.)

As for withholding federal intervention, that's simply the old-time deregulation religion preached by conservative pundits who blame the failure to deregulate fully for the California crunch. Actually, California's deregulation bill was drafted by the power companies, which made hefty contributions to grease its way through the legislature. Seeking to recapture from consumers the costs of their bad investments in nuclear plants, the utilities devised the very freeze on consumer rates on which they now blame the current crisis, and which they are trying to overturn in the courts. They also agreed to divest themselves of much of their generating capacity, leaving them vulnerable to the market manipulations of independent power producers—including their own parent companies, which are reaping huge profits from this contrived crisis. Those same parent companies are using their "near bankrupt" utilities to launder more than $20 billion in the stranded-cost bailouts that prompted the crisis in the first place.

Clearly, more bailouts for utilities and unleashing Big Oil to ravage the wilds are not the solutions to California's—or the nation's—power problems, especially when there is a native California solution at hand: municipal ownership and conservation. The model is the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, which, after closing down its one nuclear reactor in 1989, held prices steady, invested heavily in wind and solar power and promoted energy efficiency through programs like subsidized buyouts of old, energy-guzzling home refrigerators.

Unfortunately, Governor Gray Davis and the California legislature have chosen to ignore the lesson of Sacramento and to "solve" the crisis by throwing more billions in public money at the utilities. Davis should be using public money and eminent domain to buy the assets of these rogue utilities out of bankruptcy and turn them over to direct public control. A statewide network of public-owned, democratically run municipal utilities would work just fine.

Municipal ownership like Sacramento's is now being urgently considered by San Francisco and other beleaguered California cities. Rather than catering to his energy "adviser" Ken Lay of Enron (who injected $500,000 into Bush campaign coffers, making him the largest single contributor in the last election cycle) and the rest of the oil and gas companies, Bush should recognize that the wind and sun provide more than enough "power to power the power of generating plants" and that power is rightfully owned and most efficiently operated by the public itself.

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COMMENT

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Eminem—Bad Rap?

Does *The Marshall Mathers LP*—in which great white hip-hop hope Eminem fantasizes about killing his wife, raping his mother, forcing rival rappers to suck his dick and holding at knife-point faggots who keep "eggin' [him] on"—deserve Album-of-the-Year honors? This is the question before members of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS), who have, since nominating Eminem for four Grammy awards, received unsolicited advice from a bizarre constellation of celebrities, journalists and activists ranging from Charles Murray to British pop singer (and Eminem collaborator) Dido.

Bob Herbert of the *New York Times* took the opportunity to deplore not just Eminem's lyrics but the entire genre of rap music for "infantile rhymes" and "gibberish." In a more nuanced report, *Teen* magazine asked, Eminem: angel or devil? and discovered that 74 percent of teenage girls surveyed would date him if they could. The Ontario attorney general even attempted to bar Eminem from entering the country for violating the "hate propaganda" section of the Canadian Criminal Code.

But the most vociferous and persistent criticism of Eminem has come from an odd combination of activists: gay rights groups like the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) and family-values right-wingers like James Dobson's Focus on the Family. They all argue that Eminem's album threatens not only the objects of his violent lyrical outbursts but also, in GLAAD's words, the "artist's fan base of easily influenced adolescents who emulate Eminem's dress, mannerisms, words and beliefs."

In the face of all this attention to Eminem's "hate speech," even the usually taciturn NARAS is doing some public soul-searching. The academy's president, Michael Greene, recently said, "There's no question about the repugnancy of many of his songs. They're nauseating in terms of how we as a culture like to view human progress. But it's a remarkable recording, and the dialogue that it's already started is a good one."

As I have been forced to sit through all this Eminem-inspired hand-wringing over the physical and psychological well-being of faggots like myself, I've wondered just how good that dialogue really is. For one thing, so much of what has been said and written about Eminem has been political grandstanding. For example, Lynne Cheney, not usually known as a feminist, singled out Eminem as a "violent misogynist" at a Senate committee hearing on violence and entertainment. Eminem's lyrics, she argued, pose a danger to children, "the intelligent fish swimming in a deep ocean," where the media are "waves that penetrate through the water and through our children...again and again from this direction and that." Pretty sick stuff. Maybe it comes from listening to *Marshall Mathers*, but maybe it's the real Lynne Cheney, of lesbian pulp-fiction fame, finally standing up.

GLAAD, for its part, argues that Eminem encourages anti-gay violence, and it has used the controversy over Eminem's lyrics to fuel a campaign for hate-crimes legislation. While GLAAD and Cheney have different motives, both spout arguments that collapse the distance between speech and action—a strategy Catharine MacKinnon pioneered in her war against pornography. Right-

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COMMENT

wingers like Cheney and antiporn feminists like MacKinnon have long maintained such an unholy alliance, but you would think gay activists would be more cautious about making such facile claims. After all, if a hip-hop album can be held responsible for anti-gay violence, what criminal activities might the gay-friendly children's book *Daddy's Roommate* inspire? Because the lines between critique and censorship, dissent and criminality, are so porous and unpredictable, attacking Eminem for promoting "antisocial" activity is a tricky game.

Thankfully, GLAAD stops short of advocating censorship; instead it asks the entertainment industry to exercise "responsibility." GLAAD launched its anti-Eminem crusade by protesting MTV's heavy promotion of *Marshall Mathers*, which included six Video Music Award nominations and a whole weekend of programming called "Em-TV." After meeting with GLAAD representatives in June, MTV's head of programming, Brian Graden, piously confessed, "I would be lying to you if I didn't say it was something we struggled with." Liberal guilt aside, MTV nonetheless crowned Eminem with Video of the Year honors and then, in an attempt to atone for its sins, ran almost a full day of programming devoted to hate crimes, starting with a mawkish after-school special on the murder of Matthew Shepard, called *Anatomy of a Hate Crime*, and concluding with a seventeen-hour, commercial-free scrolling catalogue of the kind of horrific and yet somehow humdrum homophobic, misogynous and racist incidents that usually don't make it into the local news.

Perhaps understandably, Eminem's detractors still weren't satisfied, but given the fact that Eminem is one of the bestselling hip-hop artist of all time, what exactly did they expect from MTV and the Grammys but hypocrisy and faithless apology? And what do they really expect from Eminem—a recantation? Does anyone remember the homophobic statements that Sebastian Bach of Skid Row and Marky Mark made a decade ago? Point of fact: Marky Mark revamped his career by becoming that seminal gay icon, the Calvin Klein underwear model, and Bach, long blond locks still in place, recently starred in the Broadway musical *Jekyll and Hyde*. All of which just goes to show, if hunky (and profitable) enough, you can always bite the limp-wristed hand that feeds you.

Meanwhile, the dialogue among Eminem's fans has been equally confusing. Some, like gay diva Elton John (who's scheduled to perform a duet with Eminem at the Grammys) and hip-hop star Missy Elliot, praise Eminem's album as hard-hitting reportage from the white working-class front. They argue that his lyrics are not only excusable but laudable, because they reflect the artist's lived experiences. This is, as London *Guardian* columnist Joan Smith pointed out, a "specious defence." Should we excuse Eminem because he is, after all, sincere? Should we ignore his own genuinely violent acts—like pistol-whipping a man he allegedly caught kissing his wife? Others, like *Spin* magazine, have defended him as a brilliant provocateur. Far from being about realness, they argue, *Marshall Mathers* is parody, a horror show of self-loathing and other-loathing theater, a sick joke that Eminem's fans are in on. They point to how he peppers his rants with hyperbole, denials and reversals, calling into question not only the sincerity of his words but also their efficacy. For example, he raps about how he "hates fags" and then claims he's just kidding and that we should relax—he "likes gay men."

I don't know if Eminem really likes gay men, although I'd sure like to find out. What is clear from listening to *Marshall Mathers* is that he needs gay men. When asked by MTV's Kurt Loder about his use of the word "faggot," Eminem said, "The lowest degrading thing that you can say to a man when you're battling him is to call him a faggot and try to take away his manhood. Call him a sissy, call him a punk. 'Faggot' to me doesn't necessarily mean gay people. 'Faggot' to me just means taking away your manhood." Of course, using the word "faggot" has this effect only through its association with homosexuality and effeminacy, but there, really, you have it. Homosexuality is so crucial to Eminem's series of self-constructions (he mentions it in thirteen of eighteen tracks) that it's hard to imagine what he would rap about if he didn't have us faggots.

Eminem is, in his own words, "poor white trash." He comes from a broken home; he used to "get beat up, peed on, be on free lunch and change school every 3 months." So who does he diss in order to establish his cred as a white, male rapper? The only people lower on the adolescent totem pole than he is—faggots. This strategy of securing masculinity by obsessively disavowing homosexuality is hardly Eminem's invention, nor is it unique to male working-class culture or hip-hop music. Indeed, Eminem's lyrics may be more banal than exceptional in the way they invoke homophobic violence.

Marshall Mathers reworks the classic Western literary trope of homosexuality, which manifests itself as at once hysterical homophobia and barely submerged homoeroticism. It reflects the kind of locker-room antics that his white, male, suburban audience is well acquainted with. So too were Matthew Shepard's killers, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, and the perpetrators of the hate crimes MTV listed (who were, not so incidentally, almost all white men), and, for that matter, the Supreme Court, which recently held in the Boy Scouts' case that homophobic speech is so essential to boyhood that it's constitutionally protected. Herein may lie the real brilliance of Eminem as an artist and as a businessman. In a political culture dominated by vacuous claims to a fictive social unity—tolerance, compassionate conservatism, reconciliation—he recognizes that pain and negativity, of the white male variety in particular, still sell.

So does *Marshall Mathers* deserve Album of the Year? Well, I probably wouldn't vote for it, but if it does win, that would be perfectly in keeping with Grammy's tradition of rewarding commercial success. And where might a really good dialogue on homophobia, violence and entertainment begin? It might look at why *The Marshall Mathers LP* proved to be so pleasurable for so many, not despite but rather because of its violent themes. It might start by seeing Eminem not as an exception but as the rule—one upheld not just by commercial entertainment values but by our courts, schools, family structures and arrangements of public space. As Eminem says, "Guess there's a Slim Shady in all of us. Fuck it, let's all stand up." RICHARD KIM

Richard Kim, the Nation Institute's intern program director, is a graduate student in the American studies program at New York University.

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COMMENT

The V-Word Is Heard

That 18,000 people—mostly female—filled Madison Square Garden, a basilica of boy-sport theology, on February 10 to watch a celebrity-packed performance of *The Vagina Monologues* represents a slightly less staggering achievement than a women's takeover of the Vatican or the Chabad Lubavitcher world headquarters. The show was the capper to a daylong international event called V-Day: The Gathering to End Violence Against Women, during which sixty women from six continents presented stop-rape strategies. What was most remarkable about these projects was their insistence not simply on shielding women but on permanently and radically altering how communities talk about rape and deal with rapists. In the evening, the most arresting image was that of an Afghan woman, obliterated by her *burqa*, moving like a silent, anonymous hill of cloth toward the stage. When the cloth was lifted, a young woman emerged, dressed in the casual jacket-and-pants outfit that would blend in on any university campus in the world, but that her own country's Taliban movement would deem reason enough to beat her to death on the spot.

Those who endeavor to dismiss events like V-Day as pageants of single-issue identity politics are missing the point. The reports of sequestering of Vietnamese women in a Korean-owned sweatshop in American Samoa, where they were fed cabbage water, housed forty to a rat-infested room and kept under the thumb of sexual predators, is a reminder that at the very bottom of the "race to the bottom" economy, there's always a room where women are locked, overseen by a male with the power to starve them and to demand blowjobs in return for allowing them to keep working.

Labor organizations like UNITE and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees now understand that feminist issues like sweatshops, comparable worth for women, sexual harassment and education provide the vital pathway toward the expansion and revitalization of their movement. But events like V-Day make an even broader point: Vigorous global feminism is perhaps the single most effective form of resistance to the systematic degradation of human rights standards worldwide, which makes possible the worst ravages of the transnational economy.

The evidence of these depredations abounds. In London, girls as young as 5, purchased as slaves from Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe, are imprisoned in flats where they are rented to businessmen. Since NAFTA's inception, more than 200 young Mexican women have been raped and murdered on their way home from working in maquiladoras. V-Day's insistence on a worldwide confrontation of the systems that allow such atrocities kicks open a door for all manner of liberation activists. It's harder to imagine a single greater threat to the global sweatshop economy than the systematic pursuit of the rights of women. MARGARET SPILLANE

Margaret Spillane writes about politics and culture.

CALVIN TRILLIN

A Short Course on Getting a Presidential Pardon While a Fugitive From Justice

Apply a little grease
(Denise).
Then buy yourself an in
(Jack Quinn).

Marc Rich Redux

The spotlight is once again shining on Marc Rich. This time, Rich is represented by former Clinton counsel Jack Quinn, while Republicans Dan Burton and Arlen Specter are leading the charge, raising questions about trading with the enemy, tax evasion and influence-peddling. Just nine years ago, similar questions were raised in hearings before the Committee on Government Operations in the Democrat-controlled Congress. Back then Republicans kept silent; Rich was represented by former Nixon attorney Leonard Garment and William Bradford Reynolds, assistant attorney general in the Reagan Justice Department. The committee was investigating how Rich, America's most-wanted white-collar criminal, received more than $65 million in government grain-export subsidies, which he used to sell wheat and barley at enormous profit overseas, and how he had captured a lucrative deal to sell more than $20 million in nickel, zinc and copper to the US Mint.

Until we began research for our book *Ravenswood: The Steelworkers' Victory and the Revival of American Labor*, we, like most Americans, had never heard of Marc Rich. In 1990, 1,700 aluminum workers, locked out of their plant in a small town in West Virginia, discovered that their company was ultimately controlled by the elusive Rich. Over the next two years, their union, the United Steelworkers of America, mounted an ambitious strategic campaign [see David Corn, "The Union and the Billionaire," February 24, 1992]. The Steelworkers' investigations, which led to the hearings, revealed the vastness of Rich's holdings. It was said that Rich owned "49 percent of the world"—from oil tankers to zinc mines to aluminum smelters to luxury hotels. Despite having a controlling interest in almost every metal and agricultural commodity on the world market, there was very little that Rich owned outright. This arrangement enabled him to establish profitable relationships with businesses and governments that might otherwise have been squeamish about associating with him.

The Steelworkers were also shocked to discover that the Justice Department was not actively pursuing his case. The union quickly got a taste of Rich's ruthlessness. Early in the campaign, the local and national union leaders received a series of death threats, delivered by phone and in person, saying, "You'd better stop or you're going to get hurt.... You don't know who you're up against."

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By tracking Marc Rich drawing public attention to his dealings around the world, the union interfered with his ability to do what he did best—trade, invest and make deals behind closed doors. It prevented him from purchasing smelters in Czechoslovakia and Venezuela and a luxury hotel in Romania and from returning to the United States to visit his family. The Steelworkers not only won a victory for their members in West Virginia—they, unlike most others, held Rich accountable for his actions.

Rich engineered his pardon from President Clinton in the same way he has managed his business empire—in the shadows, just below the radar of law enforcement, the media and the public, and buttressed by the best lawyers that money can buy. Yet the pardon should in no way absolve him of his crimes. The battle will likely move to civil court and to the IRS. But it's also important for civil and political leaders to take a firm stand against Rich. When he first fled to Switzerland, he bought himself respectability through his philanthropic efforts. Now that he's returning home, the philanthropic community—as well as public officials, government agencies and political parties—should refuse Rich's money until he has made appropriate reparations to the government and until we can be sure that the money he offers has been acquired through legitimate means. His millions may have bought his pardon, but they should not buy him redemption or shield him from public scrutiny. TOM JURAVICH AND KATE BRONFENBRENNER

Tom Juravich is professor and director of the Labor Center at the University of Massachusetts, and Kate Bronfenbrenner is director of labor education research at Cornell University.

In Fact . . .

NAME THE PRESIDENT UPDATE

Our contest to pick a title for George W. Bush, the present occupant of the White House, has evidently touched a nerve. Hundreds of cards, letters and e-mails have poured in from those who can't bear to utter the words "President Bush." For the winner or winners: the glittering prize of a Bush-as-Alfred-E.-Neumann T-shirt. Judging from your letters, the contest has been therapeutic, a chance to vent the steam that's been building ever since the Supreme Court handed down the presidency. Final date for entries is February 19—Presidents' Day!

MEGA-MEDIA WATCH

When the *Washington Post* (or any other big newspaper or magazine that's part of a media conglomerate) speaks on communications policy, readers should listen with skepticism. For example, in its February 12 issue, the *Post* weighed in on "The New Communications Boss." That would be Michael Powell, head of the FCC and also, to keep it in the family, son of Secretary of State Colin Powell. The *Post* gave an approving nod to the younger Powell's remarks at a press conference outlining his views on his new responsibilities. The editors applauded what he said about instant messaging—that AOL deserves to keep its present monopoly on this technology, rather than share it with competitors. It also approved of Powell's go-slow policy on regulating interactive television, which AOL–Time Warner threatens to dominate. The *Post* discreetly averted its eyes to Powell's lack of diplomacy in saying that the concerns about poor people's lack of access to computers (the so-called digital divide) were misplaced—like wanting to buy everyone a Mercedes-Benz. Never once in the editorial did the *Post* disclose its own broadband of interests in new technologies. Its parent company owns TV stations and cable properties. It owns Kaplan Inc., an online tutoring service, which now has AOL as a partner. It also owns Washingtonpost.Newsweek Interactive, an online information service. When it comes to media matters the *Post* should either disclose its interests or shut up—sorry, recuse itself.

BUSH'S TAX CUT/DEFENSE STRATEGY

George W. Bush's recent staged tour of several military bases was heralded by a pledge to shift $5.7 billion in the current defense budget to higher pay, better housing and more healthcare for the troops. Conservatives had been expecting something splashier in the way of defense spending. Instead, Bush called for a review of the overall mission of US military forces. This meshes nicely with the primacy on his agenda of his $1.6 trillion tax cut. Campaign promises about big bucks for high-tech weapons are put on hold. Peace activists, however, weren't putting the nuclear threat on hold. On February 5–6, movie stars Martin Sheen, Michael Douglas and Paul Newman led a phone blitz of the White House, part of the Back from the Brink Campaign (www.backfromthebrink.policy.net)—a nationwide call for taking US and Russian nukes off hairtrigger alert. And on Valentine's Day several Congress members joined a Washington rally protesting Star Wars outside the Ronald Reagan Building, where former TRW board member Dick Cheney held a love fest with defense contractors.

GLAAD TIDINGS

For the second year in a row, *The Nation* has been nominated for a GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) Media Award for "Outstanding Magazine Overall Coverage." *Nation* contributor Robert Scheer was also nominated in the "Outstanding Newspaper Columnist" slot for his writings in the *Los Angeles Times*.

NEWS OF THE WEAK IN REVIEW

Morgan Stanley invested more than $100,000 to hire Bill Clinton for a speech to a convention in Florida. After all, he presided over the longest stock market uptick in history, and the brokerage snagged him for his first postpresidential speech. Then came the Rich pardon, etc. Morgan Stanley was hit by complaints from its customers. Chairman Philip Purcell dispatched a sanctimonious e-mail to clients saying the invitation had "clearly been a mistake" given Clinton's "personal behavior as President."

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THE BEAT BY JOHN NICHOLS

JOHN STENNES/GRAND FORKS HERALD

GREEN GIANT KILLER Back in the early days of the Clinton Administration, then–North Dakota Agriculture Secretary **Sarah Vogel** was touted as a potential US Secretary of Agriculture. But her challenges to corporate agribusiness and her outspoken opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement scuttled that idea. Too bad; as her subsequent career as a lawyer in her home state shows, she would have been a hell of a fighter for family farmers. With associate **Courtney Koebele**, Vogel recently won a $41 million settlement for 8,000 wheat farmers who faced financial ruin when the USDA and finance corporations shifted crop insurance formulas to pay farmers far less than had been promised. Her clients were activist farmers like **Paul** and **Tom Wiley**, who drove through North Dakota blizzards to deliver court documents before key deadlines. Vogel and her legal team are also taking on factory farms that spoil the environment, agribusiness corporations accused of selling farmers bad seeds and insurance companies that fail to cover crop damage. She's even going after the Bureau of Indian Affairs on behalf of members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe who say BIA policies threaten Native American farmers. In farm country, Vogel has earned a reputation as "a giant killer in ag law." The fiery lawyer—who is using some of her fees to reopen Bismarck's natural-food restaurant, the Green Earth Cafe—says, "Corporate agriculture would have farmers be serfs." A third-generation rural activist, she says she'll keep using the courts until Washington enacts "farm policy from a farmer perspective"—including restrictions on agribusiness monopolies, fair-trade provisions and limits on genetic modification of food.

IN THE FDA WE DISTRUST Academics and agribusiness leaders who gathered on the University of Minnesota campus in early February dutifully sang the praises of Food and Drug Administration policies on genetically engineered foods. There was even a chorus of endorsements of FDA plans to implement voluntary guidelines for labeling altered foods. "The public trusts the FDA on this issue," intoned panelist Thomas Hoban. Outside in the Minneapolis cold, however, the public wasn't following the script. Police were called to disperse a crowd of several dozen activists from **Genetically Engineered Food Alert**, who raised a ruckus about what protester **Matt Rand** labeled the FDA's "very weak industry-backed policy." Food safety activists across the country are stepping up the campaign to get the United States to regulate the marketing of foods that are genetically engineered or that include GE ingredients—which now make up two-thirds of products on supermarket shelves. The **Center for Food Safety** and the **Campaign to Label Genetically Engineered Foods** are among those urging consumers to write to the FDA during a comment period that ends April 3, opposing the voluntary labeling plan and calling for tighter regulation. On Capitol Hill, **Dennis Kucinich**, the Ohio Democrat who heads the **Congressional Progressive Caucus**, is stepping up a drive for Congressional action on his **Genetically Engineered Food Right to Know Act**. He's working with the **Organic Consumers Association** and other groups to get constituents to push House members to endorse the bill—which had fifty-six co-sponsors in the last Congress. "If you ask the average American whether they want a label telling them the food they're buying has been genetically modified, they will answer, 'Absolutely,'" says Kucinich, who has developed a **GE Food Action Center** on his website, www.house.gov/kucinich. "By putting some organization behind that sentiment, we can make this into so big an issue that the industry lobbyists will have to get out of the way."

POLITICAL HEAT FROM THE KITCHEN "Eating is a political act," says **Alice Waters**, whose pioneering Berkeley restaurant Chez Panisse has inspired dozens of organic eateries to reject the processed foods of agribusiness and buy produce from small farmers in neighboring communities. Top cooks from many of these restaurants have formed the **Chefs Collaborative** (chefnet.com), a network that promotes "sustainable cuisine" by supporting local farmers and educating children about healthy eating. Recently, they've stepped up efforts to educate chefs and consumers about threats to endangered species and ecosystems posed by corporate agribusiness. Chez Panisse, Philadelphia's White Dog Cafe and Chicago's Frontera Grill have launched high-profile initiatives to eliminate GE foods from their menus. "It is critical for us, as chefs, to lead in this public debate and to field questions in our dining rooms and in our kitchens," says Frontera's **Rick Bayless**. "We're still cooking, but we're also entering the public debate as people who work with food and who want Americans to start asking the questions we do about how food is produced," adds **Ann Cooper**, author of *Bitter Harvest: A Chef's Perspective on the Hidden Dangers in the Foods We Eat and What You Can Do About It* (Routledge)... Now that even TV networks are reporting on mad cow disease, activist-authors **Sheldon Rampton** and **John Stauber** are feeling a certain amount of satisfaction. "For years, when consumers should have been told about the risks they were taking when they bought beef, there was a blackout on the issue," says Stauber, who with Rampton wrote *Mad Cow USA: Could the Nightmare Happen Here?* (now available free at www.prwatch.com). Stauber and Rampton are back with a new book, *Trust Us, We're Experts! How Industry Manipulates Science and Gambles With Your Future* (Putnam).

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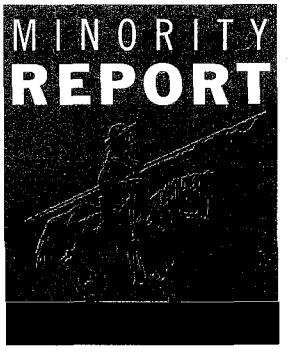
CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The Embarrassment of the Riches



Are the Clintons better off than they were eight years ago? The evidence appears to point to a resounding yes. So why do they seem to resent the question? Probably because only a full-dress Congressional investigation could establish quite how this came to be and exactly how much better off they are. And are we all better off as well? It depends, as Bill Cosby's grandmother famously said while solving the half-full, half-empty distinction, on whether you're pouring or drinking.

In Korea this past fall, after the visit of Madeleine Albright to Pyongyang, expectation was high that a presidential visit would follow and that perhaps the long and lethal confrontation on the peninsula would begin to dissipate somewhat. This would have had an importance well beyond the local: North Korea is the central exhibit in the Rumsfeldian worldview and the main pretext for the "Star Wars" fantasy incubated by Reagan, preserved by Clinton and Gore, and now approaching consummation with Bush. To defuse this and, incidentally, to begin the emancipation of the North Koreans from their petrified party-state, would have been a "legacy" action worthy of the name. But Clinton, with several weeks still to go, announced that he just could not find the time.

Now we know what was keeping him so busy in his closing months. He was working like a beaver on arranging his own immunity, on trading pardons for kickbacks and on asset-stripping the White House. He was also working on the lying cover stories that would justify these things. Only in the latter respect has his usual luck failed him, and I suppose that this is because he no longer has the bodyguard of hacks and spinners who were retained at public expense to defend him on previous occasions. Sidney Blumenthal—whose own defenders once accused me of denouncing him in order to sell a small book I hadn't even written—is too busy justifying his own $650,000 advance to spare much time to put a nice gloss on the embarrassment of the Riches. And so Clinton was reduced to red-faced and pathetic spluttering before an audience of bond traders in Boca Raton, unable to face the simplest questions and unable any longer to hide behind ludicrous claims, such as that he was our first black President, still less the friend of those who "work hard and play by the rules." He sucks up to the fat cats; they wrinkle their noses and hand him the check using a pair of tongs. Perfect.

To anyone with eyes to see, the Clinton presidency always had the look and feel of a shakedown enterprise—the transfer of the Arkansas racketeering style to the more lush and lucrative terrain of Washington, DC. "Nice to see you," the eventually discovered video has him saying to Roger Tamraz, a man who raises eyebrows in the Beirut "business community," when this choice person appears at a White House coffee morning. We don't know what he said to James Riady, front man for Suharto, when Riady gave him a very thick and sleek envelope in the back of a limousine, because although he admits to the meeting and to the money, the master of the briefing book and the king of detail has no real-time recall of the actual conversation. Other influence-peddlers for the Chinese had virtual passes to the Executive Mansion; Dick Morris was employed there under a code name while helping to concert a fantastic circumvention of all known laws on campaign finance.

The "privacy" defense was a very ingenious way of fending off inquiries into this, and it worked, too, when Clinton was accused of using campaign-finance cupcakes as personal comfort women. How nice it was to see that Walter Kaye, the New York moneyman who bought Miss Lewinsky her internship, also contributed some furniture and even paid for Mrs. Clinton's victory ball at the Mayflower in January. (No hard feelings, eh Walter?)

The First Lady has taken to the privacy tactic like a duck to water, first saying that what happened in the publicly owned Oval Office and Lincoln Bedroom was confidential, and nobody's business, and then agreeing to write about it herself at the rate of $1 million per year of occupancy. Obviously, it became tiring to the Clintons to raise money from sleazebags only for their own re-election. The time comes, as come it has, when you weary of public-spirited effort and want a little pot of dough for your own pretty needs.

In much the same way, Jesse Jackson feels entitled to use the pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow to succor the unintended and inconvenient results of his own safe-sex "ministry"; hell, a preacher can't be expected to live for others all the damn time. (What I like about the Reverend is his lack of hypocrisy; he told Clinton to keep lying, to make a pious and prayerful face, and to pay off the inconvenient chick with other people's money. At last—a Christian who really practices what he preaches!)

A proper investigation of the Lewinsky matter, and of the Revlon money that was used to try and help condition the testimony of Lewinsky and of Webster Hubbell, would have exposed the nature of this lawless and corrupt White House several years before it exposed itself, and in time to do something about it. But a majority of the American left decided that it really did not want to know, and that the "privacy" defense was a valid one. Some things, indeed, were so "private" that they justified the invocation of "executive privilege." Not even that flagrant contradiction was enough to unsettle the loyalists. By the time Al Gore had his tear-stained confrontation with Clinton last November, it was all too late. And he, like everyone else, was calmly told that if he didn't like it, it was just too bad. Clinton already had, as LBJ used to relish saying, the man's pecker in his pocket. For good measure, the Democratic National Committee is turned over to Terry McAuliffe, the President's ex–mansion hunter, who brings the fresh, breezy atmosphere of Teamsters Union ethics to this already rather raddled outfit. So it seems that the Clinton legacy is secure, and that most liberals can safely claim to have been a part of it. ■

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KATHA POLLITT

Vaginal Politics

Imagine Madison Square Garden brimming over with 18,000 laughing and ebullient women of every size, shape, age and color, along with their male friends, ditto. Imagine that in that immense space, usually packed with hooting sports fans, these women are watching Oprah, Queen Latifah, Claire Danes, Swoosie Kurtz, Kathleen Chalfant, Julie Kavner (voice of Marge Simpson), Rosie Perez, Donna Hanover (soon-to-be-ex-wife of New York's bigamous mayor) and sixty-odd other A-list divas put on a gala production of *The Vagina Monologues*, Eve Ensler's theater piece about women and their mimis, totos, split knishes, Gladys Siegelmans, pussycats, poonanis and twats. Imagine that this extravaganza is part of a huge $2 million fundraising effort for V-Day, the antiviolence project that grew out of the show and that gives money to groups fighting violence against women around the world. That was what happened on February 10, with more donations and more performances to come as the play is produced by students at some 250 colleges around the country, from Adelphi on Long Island—where it was completely sold out and where, sources assure me, the v-word retains every bit of its shock value—to Yale.

And they keep saying feminism is dead.

The Vagina Monologues, in fact, was singled out in *Time*'s 1998 cover story "Is Feminism Dead?" as proof that the movement had degenerated into self-indulgent sex chat. (This was a new departure for the press, which usually dismisses the movement as humorless, frumpish and puritanical.) In her *Village Voice* report on the gala, Sharon Lerner, a terrific feminist journalist, is unhappy that the actresses featured at the Garden event prefer the v-word to the f-word. ("Violence against women is a feminist issue?" participant Isabella Rossellini asks her. "I don't think it is." This from the creator of a new perfume called "Manifesto"!) Women's rights aren't what one associates with postfeminist icons like Glenn Close, whose most indelible screen role was as the bunny-boiling man-stalker in *Fatal Attraction*, or Calista Flockhart, television's dithery microskirted lawyerette Ally McBeal. Still, aren't we glad that Jane Fonda, who performed the childbirth monologue, has given up exercise mania and husband-worship and is donating $1 million to V-Day? Better late than never, I say.

At the risk of sounding rather giddy myself—I'm writing this on Valentine's Day—I'd argue that the implied contradiction between serious business (daycare, abortion, equal pay) and sex is way overdrawn. Sexual self-expression—that's self-indulgent sex chat to all you old Bolsheviks out there—was a crucial theme of the modern women's movement from the start. Naturally so: How can you see yourself as an active subject, the heroine of your own life, if you think you're an inferior being housed in a shameful, smelly body that might give pleasure to others, but not to you? The personal is political, remember that?

The Vagina Monologues may not be great literature—on the page it's a bit thin, and the different voices tend to run together into EveEnslerspeak about seashells and flowers and other lovely bits of nature. But as a performance piece it's fantastic: a cabaret floor show by turns hilarious, brassy, lyrical, poignant, charming, romantic, tragic, vulgar, sentimental, raunchy and exhilarating. In "The Flood," an old woman says she thinks of her "down there" as a cellar full of dead animals, and tells of the story of her one passionate kiss and her dream of Burt Reynolds swimming in her embarrassing "flood" of sexual wetness. A prim, wryly clever woman in "The Vagina Workshop" learns how to give herself orgasms at one of Betty Dodson's famous masturbation classes. At the Garden, Ensler led the cast in a chorus of orgasmic moans, and Close got the braver members of the audience to chant "Cunt! Cunt! Cunt!" at the climax of a poetic monologue meant to redeem and reclaim the dirtiest of all dirty words.

How anyone could find *The Vagina Monologues* antimale or pornographic is beyond me—it's a veritable ode to warm, quirky, affectionate, friendly, passionate sex. The only enemies are misogyny, sexual shame and sexual violence, and violence is construed fairly literally: A poor black child is raped by her father's drunken friend; a Bosnian girl is sexually tortured by Serbian paramilitaries. None of your ambiguous was-it-rape? scenarios here. Oprah performed a new monologue, "Under the *Burqa*," about the horrors of life for Afghan women under Taliban rule, followed by Zoya—a young representative of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)—who gave a heartbreaking, defiant speech. Three African women spoke against female genital mutilation and described ongoing efforts to replace cutting with new coming-of-age rituals, "circumcision by words."

I hadn't particularly wanted to see *The Vagina Monologues*. I assumed that it would be earnest and didactic—or maybe silly, or exploitative, or crude, a sort of *Oh! Calcutta!* for women. But I was elated by it. Besides being a wonderful night at the theater, it reminded me that after all the feminist debates (and splits), and all the books and the Theory and the theories, in the real world there are still such people as women, who share a common biology and much else besides. And the power of feminism, whether or not it goes by that name, still resides in its capacity to transform women's consciousness at the deepest possible level: That's why Betty Friedan called her collection of letters from women not *It Got Me a Raise* (or a daycare center, or an abortion) but *It Changed My Life*. Sisterhood-is-powerful feminism may feel out of date to the professoriat, but there's a lot of new music still to be played on those old bones.

Besides, if feminists don't talk about sex in a fun, accessible, inspiring, nonpuritanical way, who will?

* * *

Subject to Debate: Sense and Dissents on Women, Politics and Culture, a collection of columns originally published in this space, is just out from Modern Library as a paperback original. It has a very pretty cover and a never-before-published introductory essay, and contains most of the columns I still agree with, and one or two about which I have my doubts. ■

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ARTICLES

KARL ROVE AND THE POLITICS OF DESTRUCTION

by LOUIS DUBOSE

BUSH'S HIT MAN

In early December 1999, George W. Bush's chief political strategist, Karl Rove, and *Dallas Morning News* reporter Wayne Slater squared off in the Manchester, New Hampshire, airport. Rove was angry over a story Slater had written suggesting that it was plausible that Rove was behind the whispering campaign that warned that Senator John McCain—then soaring in the GOP presidential primary polls—might any day unravel because he had been under so much pressure when he was tortured as a POW in Vietnam.

In a 700-word article that Slater said wasn't the most significant thing he'd written about Rove, he referred to questionable campaign tactics attributed to Rove: teaching College Republicans dirty tricks; spreading a rumor that former Texas Governor Ann Richards was too tolerant of gays and lesbians; circulating a mock newspaper that featured a story about a former Democratic governor's drinking and driving when he was a college student; spreading stories about Texas official Jim Hightower's alleged role in a contribution kickback scheme; and alerting the press to the fact that Lena Guerrero, a rising star in the Texas Democratic Party, had lied about graduating from college. Rove was explicitly linked by testimony and press reports to all but the gay and lesbian story; the college incident had been so widely reported for fifteen years that it was essentially part of the common domain. Slater also reported that primary candidates Steve Forbes and Gary Bauer blamed the Bush camp for the smear campaign.

"He said I had harmed his reputation," Slater recalls. Says another reporter who was traveling with Bush, "It was pretty heated. They were nose to nose. Rove was furious and had his finger in Slater's chest." Adds the same reporter, "What was interesting then is that everyone on the campaign charter concluded that Rove was responsible for rumors about McCain."

That Karl Rove, who, according to the White House press office is not giving interviews, hasn't always abided by the Marquess of Queensberry rules of political engagement is not exactly breaking news. As long ago as 1989, when Rove collaborated with an FBI agent investigating Hightower, the then–Texas agricultural commissioner complained about "Nixonian dirty tricks."

That was at a time when Rove was a big player only in Texas. Since then, he has become George W. Bush's closest adviser, directed Bush's presidential campaign and is now working in an office just down the hall from the most powerful official in the world. Some wonder to what extent Rove will use the power of the federal government against those who would cross the President. Rove's past suggests such worries are not unfounded. "This guy is worse than Haldeman and Ehrlichman," a source who worked in Hightower's office twelve years ago said in a recent interview, referring to Nixon's advisers at the time of the Watergate break-in. "He'll have an enemies list." The interview ended with a request common among sources speaking about Rove, even those no longer involved in politics: "I'd prefer you didn't quote me on this."

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Rove operates from deeply held conservative beliefs, which were shaped when he was a child growing up in Utah. His sister told Miriam Rozen of the *Dallas Observer* that as a child Rove had a WAKE UP AMERICA poster hanging above his bed. Rove has said that while going to college, he was never inclined to identify with the antiwar movement and supported the troops because "it was hard to sympathize with all those Commies." The "die-hard Nixonite" remains deeply resentful of the legacy of the counterculture of the sixties. Visitors to his Austin office would often leave with a copy of *The Dream and the Nightmare* by Myron Magnet, a Manhattan Institute fellow who argues that the political and cultural left corrupted the nation's poor and deprived them of the work ethic they now need to lift themselves out of poverty. Rove is an eclectic and voracious reader, and although he never completed college, a self-taught historian. He is absolutely dedicated to George W. Bush, whom he describes as "the kind of candidate and officeholder political hacks like me wait for a lifetime to be associated with."

Rove arrived in Houston in 1977 to work for a George Herbert Walker Bush PAC run by James Baker 3d. Rove subsequently moved from Houston to Austin, and in the ten years it took George W. Bush to lose $2 million of other people's money in the oilfields of West Texas, he became the Republican Party's premier political consultant. At the time of Rove's arrival, US Senator John Tower was the only Republican holding statewide office. When Rove left earlier this year to serve as a senior adviser to President Bush, all twenty-nine statewide elected offices were held by Republicans, and both US Senate seats were occupied by Rove clients: Phil Gramm and Kay Bailey Hutchison. Almost half of GOP officeholders—including the governor, the attorney general, the chief justice and several justices on the Texas Supreme Court—were also clients. Rove and the consulting firm he owned until joining the Bush campaign have represented more than seventy-five candidates in twenty-four states.

Rove calls George W. Bush 'the kind of candidate and officeholder political hacks like me wait for a lifetime to be associated with.'

There have always been nagging questions about the tactics Rove has used to establish market domination. So when a tape of Bush's practice debate sessions was mailed to Congressman Tom Downey, Al Gore's opponent in practice debates, the speculation among the press corps in Austin was that Rove had arranged it. (A post office surveillance camera captured an image of an employee of Bush media consultant Mark McKinnon mailing a package that might have been the tape; a federal grand jury in Austin is still looking into the incident.) Some speculated that the move was intended to eliminate Downey from his role as debate coach (which it did), others that it would provide an excuse to cancel the debates (which, in hindsight, would have been helpful to Gore).

Rove, after all, works in the tradition of the late Lee Atwater, the Republican attack-dog/consultant who said of Michael Dukakis that he would "strip the bark off the little bastard" and "make 'Willie' Horton his running mate."

Rove's first foray into politics involved gaining entry to the office of Alan Dixon—a candidate for state treasurer in Illinois in 1970—stealing some campaign stationery and printing and distributing a fake invitation to Dixon's campaign headquarters, promising "free beer, free food, girls, and a good time." "I was nineteen and I got involved in a political prank," Rove told the *Dallas Morning News* in 1999. A year later, Atwater ran Rove's campaign for the presidency of the national College Republicans, and working together they defeated Terry Dolan, the Republican operative who later founded the National Conservative Political Action Committee that helped elect Ronald Reagan.

When, in the wake of the Watergate break-in, Rove was accused of teaching dirty tricks to college Republicans, he attributed the accusations to rumors started by Dolan. After the FBI interviewed Rove, the Republican National Committee—then chaired by Bush the Elder—looked into the charges, decided they were baseless and offered Rove work. Rove later joined Bush and Baker to work on the PAC that Bush set up to position himself for the 1980 presidential campaign, which he lost to Ronald Reagan.

Rove soldiered on in obscurity until 1986, when he was working on the second campaign of Bill Clements, a Republican trying to recapture the governor's office after losing it to Democrat Mark White. Rove made news by going public with a complaint that an electronic bugging device had been found in his office—shortly before a scheduled televised debate between the two candidates. "We never took it seriously, because we knew nobody in our shop had anything to do with it," says Dwayne Hollman, who worked for White at the time. Hollman said it was assumed that it was a publicity stunt. "It was investigated by the FBI," Hollman said, "and nothing ever came of it."

Yet some wonder what "came of" Rove's meeting with FBI agent Greg Rampton, who conducted that investigation. Local authorities who looked into the bugging seem to agree with Hollman's assessment. "We were the first on the scene and concluded that Rove had hired a company to debug his office, and that the same company had planted the bug," says a source involved in the Travis County DA office's investigation. But the media reported that Rampton had determined there was nothing to pursue.

Two years later, Rampton began an investigation that involved his setting up shop in the offices of Garry Mauro, the state land commissioner and later the loser in the 1998 gubernatorial race won by George W. Bush. Mauro said Rampton informed him that a former Land Commission employee was involved in an appraisals scheme that involved the commission. "I told my general counsel to tell [Rampton] to come on in," Mauro said. Rampton accepted the invitation. "On the day of the Democratic state convention, I got a subpoena for every document you could possibly imagine," Mauro said.

Mauro says he was warned by Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock—who, Mauro said, insisted on speaking to him outside their office buildings—that three Democrats, including Mauro, Hightower and himself, were being targeted. As Mauro puts it, "Greg Rampton lived in my office. He roamed the halls. He had us put in a computer room, he picked out files of people who had given money and tried to establish by regression analysis...that anytime

Louis Dubose, politics editor of the Austin Chronicle, *is the author, with Molly Ivins, of* Shrub: The Short but Happy Political Life of George W. Bush *(Vintage).* *Research support provided by the Elections 2000 Fund of the Nation Institute.*

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PART I

Lecture 1: Introduction to Existentialism
Lecture 2: Camus, *The Stranger*
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Lecture 4: Camus, *The Plague and The Fall*
Lecture 5: Søren Kierkegaard: "Becoming a Christian"
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Lecture 9: Husserl, Heidegger and "Phenomenology"
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ROBERT SOLOMON, Ph.D., is the Quincy Lee Centennial Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas, where he has taught since 1972. A recipient of both the Standard Oil Outstanding Teaching Award and the President's Associates Teaching Award, he is the author of more than a dozen books in philosophy and psychology, including *About Love* (1988), *The Passions* (1976, 1993), *From Hegel to Existentialism* (1988), and *Ethics and Excellence* (1992).

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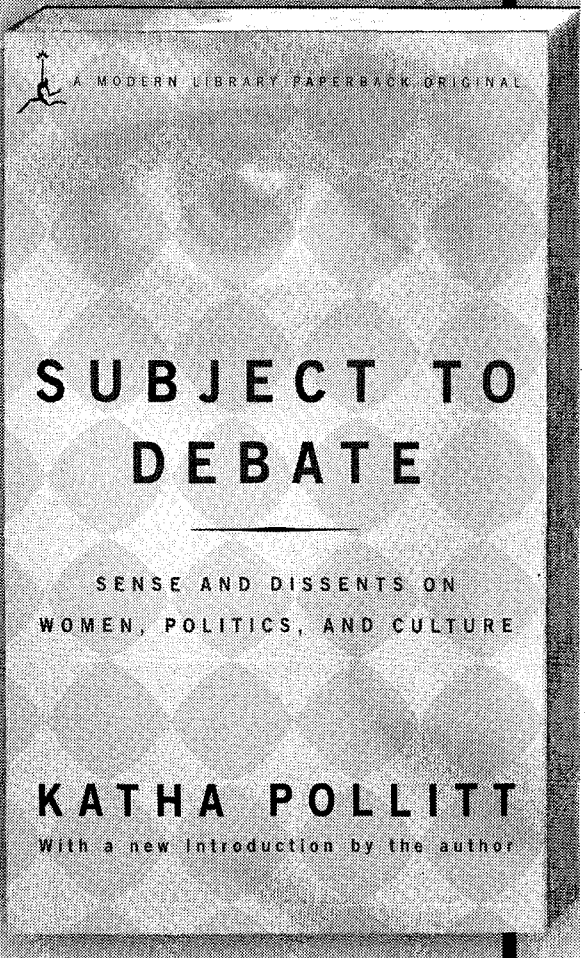
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somebody gives you a contribution, there is a quid pro quo. Once they showed up with twelve agents and brought their own copier." In the end they found nothing, according to Mauro. "But," he adds, "they made it hard to run a campaign." (Attempts to contact Rampton through the FBI office in Denver, from which he recently retired, were not successful.)

If Rampton struck out in Mauro's office, he connected in Hightower's, after slowing down only to subpoena Bullock's campaign finance filings. In the summer of 1989, pending indictments against two aides to Hightower—who used his office to attack what he called "the bullies, bankers, bastards and tort reformers" who run the state—were announced in Washington. But it wasn't Rampton or any other Justice Department official who announced them. It was Karl Rove, the political consultant working for Hightower's Republican opponent, Rick Perry.

Hightower refuses to discuss the incident. Rove later admitted under oath that he had met with Rampton during the summer of 1989 "regarding a probe of political corruption in the office of Texas agriculture commissioner Jim Hightower." And in June of 1990, Perry sent out a fundraising letter claiming that Hightower's office was rife with corruption and was under investigation by the FBI, though there were no indictments until after the 1991 general election, in which Hightower lost his re-election bid.

Rove has repeatedly denied involvement in the FBI investigations of top Democrats in the 1980s and did not respond to questions submitted to him regarding this story. When questioned under oath before a Texas Senate committee in 1991, Rove was evasive about his relationship with Rampton and engaged in semantic hairsplitting worthy of Bill Clinton. "How long have you known an FBI agent by the name of Greg [Rampton]?" a Democratic senator asked Rove. The answer should have been fairly straightforward, as Rampton had cleared Rove of the bugging incident five years earlier and had met with him a number of times subsequently, which Rove had disclosed in a federal questionnaire in 1989. Yet Rove was, to say the least, evasive: "Senator, it depends. Would you define 'know' for me?"

Rove became acquainted with George W. Bush while working for his father and Baker in Houston but didn't work for the younger Bush until he decided to run for governor in 1994. The campaign was all Rove: a four-point message, rumors about the opponent (Ann Richards) circulated by surrogates and little direct exposure to the press.

To those following the Bush campaigns that Rove ran, it was evident that he was more than just a political consultant to Bush. Writing in the *Boston Globe* magazine, David Shribman posed the questions that many in the press corps dared not ask during the presidential campaign: "Is there a place where George W. Bush ends and Karl Rove begins? Are you the wizard behind the curtain of George W.? Is W. too dependent upon you? And, worst of all: Are you George W. Bush's brain?"

Rove has certainly done much of Bush's thinking for him. Asked by a reporter for the *National Review* what thinkers had shaped Bush's political philosophy, Rove cited Magnet's *The Dream and the Nightmare*, Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The Demoralization of Society*, James Q. Wilson's *On Character* and several other books—none of which Bush would have been likely to see but for Rove. (Recall Bush's response in the debate about which

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political philosopher had most shaped his thinking: It was not Magnet, Himmelfarb or Wilson but Jesus Christ.)

When working as a political operative and not a mentor, Rove has been bipartisan, eliminating Republicans who represented a threat to his boss's career with the same zeal with which he attacked Democrats. "He's enormously effective," says Dallas lawyer and Bush critic Tom Pauken, noting that Rove's political bible is Machiavelli's *The Prince*. And it is Machiavelli—not the authors of the conservative and neocon canon—who has informed Rove's treatment of Pauken. In 1994, as Bush was beginning his first race for governor, the machinery of the Republican Party of Texas was taken over by Reagan Republicans and fundamentalist Christians, and Pauken—who had worked in the Reagan Administration—was made party chairman. It was a faction that Rove correctly perceived would create problems for Bush, who had always understood that the Christian conservatives must be kept in line. Rove called big funders and diverted money from the state party to Bush political accounts that he controlled. "He did everything he could to cut off the money to the party...throughout the time I was chair," Pauken says. "Karl understands the importance of money in politics, and he made it more difficult for me to function."

Similarly, after two Christian-right candidates for the State Board of Education, Bob Offutt and Donna Ballard (Offutt was an incumbent), traveled to New Hampshire to endorse Steve Forbes in the Republican primary, they returned home to find their opponents' campaigns suddenly flush with cash from big Republican givers associated with Rove. "You don't cross Karl Rove and not expect repercussions," a defeated Offutt told the Austin *American-Statesman*. A Republican political consultant was more colorful: "To put it in a nutshell, you don't tug on Superman's cape."

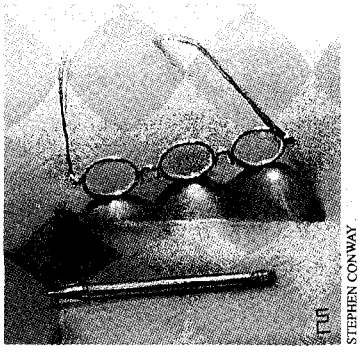
In January, Superman moved into the White House office previously occupied by Hillary Clinton. And he's only a phone call away from Attorney General John Ashcroft. ■

IT'S TIME FOR A LIBERAL PHILOSOPHY FOCUSING ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INEQUALITY.

A Better Third Way

RICHARD D. KAHLENBERG AND RUY TEIXEIRA

The stalemate in the 2000 election is the latest evidence that the New Democrat "Third Way" vision for American politics is fundamentally flawed. It doesn't galvanize voters, it doesn't effectively unite the Democratic Party and it's easily co-opted by the Republicans (think George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism"). Consider these important election results.



STEPHEN CONWAY

§ Gore won only 48 percent of the popular vote, giving the Democrats an average of just 47 percent over the past three elections.

§ Democrats failed to retake the House once again. The Republicans now control it by nine seats, while before the 1992 election the Democrats controlled the House by 100 seats. At that point, the Democrats also controlled the Senate by fourteen seats, while the Senate is now evenly split.

§ Outside their base (blacks, Hispanics, union households), the Democrats continue to lose badly among mid- to downscale voters. For example, Gore lost white voters with incomes under $75,000 by thirteen points and non-college-educated whites by seventeen points.

§ The Democrats have had some success with certain upscale voters—for example, Gore carried white women with a postgraduate education by twenty-two points. But that's no more than 5 percent of voters.

These results are striking because the New Democrats' original political plan was to gain a clear electoral majority by appealing to Reagan Democrats—white working-class voters who had soured on the Democratic Party. Now they lionize soccer moms, wired workers and other upscale voters and seem to ignore the less affluent voters they expressed such interest in in the 1980s. This shift is well documented in their own writings. For example, in 1989 the Democratic Leadership Council published the seminal New Democrat study, *The Politics of Evasion*. This treatise was replete with respectful references to the "white working class," the "lower middle class" and "middle income voters." In contrast, the DLC's 1998 document, *Blueprint: The Next Politics*, is rife with laudatory references to a rising, affluent "learning class" and an expanding "upper middle class." This mantra about affluent learning-class voters was repeated by DLC chief Al From at a January 24 forum in Washington that sparked clashes between Democratic centrists and progressives over the direction the party should take. Considering that the income distribution, according to the Census Bureau, has improved only modestly since *The Politics of Evasion* came out, it's hard not to read a fair amount of significance into this shift in emphasis.

There's also been a big shift in the kinds of policies favored by New Democrats. Ideas endorsed in the early 1990s—reflecting their heavy involvement in Clinton's successful presidential candidacy—included promoting economic security, providing

Richard D. Kahlenberg and Ruy Teixeira are senior fellows at the Century Foundation. Kahlenberg is the author of All Together Now: Creating Middle-Class Schools Through Public School Choice *(Brookings). Teixeira is the author, with Joel Rogers, of* America's Forgotten Majority: Why the White Working Class Still Matters *(Basic).* *The views expressed are solely those of the authors. Research support provided by the Elections 2000 Fund of the Nation Institute.*

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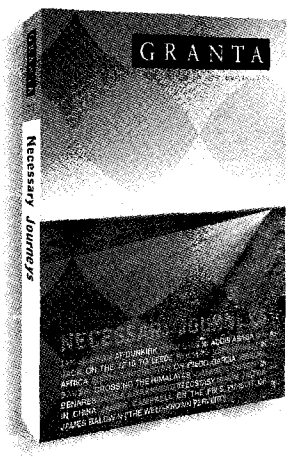

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universal health coverage, increasing public investment and fighting inequality. Current DLC documents call for privatizing Social Security, introducing Medicare vouchers, eliminating the national debt (greatly reducing funds available for public investment) and unleashing a new economy that has, so far, shown itself more capable of enriching a new crop of Internet billionaires than of substantially reducing inequality.

In adopting this stance, New Democrats seem oddly similar to New Politics activists of the early 1970s, who were likewise unconcerned with white working-class voters and solicitous toward liberal elements of the upper middle class. The big difference is that this segment of the upper middle class is no longer economically liberal and appears mostly interested in fending off socially intolerant conservatism. For example, data from a postelection poll conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Research for the Campaign for America's Future indicate that affluent white liberals in the 2000 election were motivated more by the desire to safeguard a woman's right to choose and to receive middle-class tax cuts than by investing in education and protecting Social Security. In 1989 New Democrats expressed concerns about the "shrinking influence of lower-middle-class Democrats and the concomitant rise of higher socioeconomic-status Democrats who hold liberal views on social issues" but shunned issues of economic inequality. Over the past decade, those New Democrats have not only failed to find solutions to the problems posed by the party's wealth gap, they have, ironically, adopted many positions they earlier lamented.

Clearly, it's time to rethink the Third Way. While many of President Clinton's political accommodations were probably necessary, he is fundamentally a transitional figure. It is time for a New Liberal philosophy to supersede not only Old Liberal approaches but those of New Democrats as well. This New Liberal approach would share the orthodox Third Way premise—that traditional liberal and conservative approaches are wanting—but would offer a dramatically different program aimed at seriously addressing fundamental problems of social justice and economic inequality. Such is the payoff, after all, that the Third Way movement was meant to make possible.

Both of us agree with some of the New Democrats' original critique of liberalism. In the early 1990s Teixeira worked for the Progressive Policy Institute and Kahlenberg worked for Virginia Senator Chuck Robb, one of the original New Democrats. Third Way advocates not only helped restore the credibility of progressives on crime and national defense, they have put progressives in better sync with the values of average Americans through their emphasis on work over welfare and equality of opportunity over equality of result.

This had the salutary effect of defanging the conservative critique of "amoral, big-government liberalism." But none of this justifies New Democrats' support for a needlessly draconian welfare reform bill that failed to guarantee jobs or for an increasingly repressive and ineffective "drug war." Moreover, on central economic issues, Third Way proponents have always tended to ally themselves closely with powerful business interests and have increasingly downplayed the traditional progressive concern for the underdog (or even the "middledog"). We take issue with New Democrats' contention that "outdated appeals to class grievance and attacks on corporate perfidy only alienate new constituencies

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and ring increasingly hollow to the modern work force." And we believe that the emphasis on fiscal responsibility, while a reasonable part of the progressive program, has been taken to an extreme.

Indeed, today progressives are not united behind the need for major new initiatives to promote greater equality. Faced with a surplus unimagined just a few years ago, many have embraced policies heavy on debt reduction and light on investment in enterprises like education. A New Liberal approach would be quite different.

First, we believe that the New Liberalism, unlike New Democrats, would recognize that "you get what you pay for." There's just no way the common problems of middle- to low-income voters can be adequately addressed in this country when such an overwhelming priority is put on paying down the national debt.

Take the issue of education, generally the number-one concern of voters in the country today. Families want to be assured that their children receive a quality education, even as they worry about the financial and time pressures involved in juggling children, school and work. New Liberals would therefore advocate a substantial expansion of federal investment in education, including: (1) a major teacher pay increase, to address the need to attract talented men and women; (2) the support necessary to open schools early, keep them open into the evening and make them available during the summer; (3) universal access to preschool, including fully funding Head Start; and (4) a generous income-contingent college loan program, where students' repayments are pegged to their actual earnings after they leave school, to make college education a reasonable option for many who now see the associated debt burden as too high. Combined with needed educational reforms like public-school choice, outlined below, these major investment initiatives would go a long way toward both improving access to good education and easing pressure on working parents.

The New Liberalism would emphasize programs that benefit those of middle to low income and education across all races.

Second, we believe the New Liberalism would be strongly committed to growing the new economy, but also to rectifying inequality and equipping everyone to prosper in this rapidly changing environment. Fast growth is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the kind of improvements working families need. For example, New Liberals would be committed to expanding world trade but also to underpinning that trade with reasonable labor and environmental standards. And New Liberals would recognize the need to temper the process of globalization with strong provisions to stabilize the world financial system and promote balanced development in poorer countries. At home, New Liberals would support substantial increases in the minimum wage to soften the sharpest edges of inequality. And major campaign finance reform is an essential ingredient of insuring that politicians spend less time on cutting estate taxes and more on the needs of average voters.

Third, we believe the New Liberalism would emphasize universal programs that disproportionately benefit those of middle to low income and education, across all races, rather than race-based programs. We take our cue from Robert Kennedy's belief that "poverty is closer to the root of the problem than color," and that "we have to convince [blacks] and poor whites that they have common interests."

Such a universalist stance obviously includes preserving Medicare and Social Security, as the Democrats emphasized in the 2000 campaign. But, while defending social insurance must remain a bedrock commitment of Democrats and progressives, it is difficult to argue that it constitutes a convincing approach to the unfolding problems of the new economy. For many working families, the Democratic program may have failed to excite for precisely this reason. New Liberals advocate a more forward-looking approach that focuses on the new economy in critical areas like education, training, childcare, work-family stress, scientific research and, of course, universal health and pension coverage.

Taking universalism seriously, New Liberals would also offer fresh approaches in contentious areas that have fractured the progressive coalition, sundering blacks from whites and organized from unorganized workers. For example, New Liberals would seek to apply civil rights principles to poor and working-class people of all races in at least three areas: affirmative action, school desegregation and union organizing.

First, affirmative action should be redefined to provide a leg up to economically disadvantaged people of all races. In the legal and political warfare over affirmative action in university admissions and elsewhere, Old Liberals emphasize ends (we don't want universities and the professional work force to be all white), while New Democrats and conservatives emphasize means (we don't want skin color to determine who gets ahead in society). New Liberals seek to reconcile fair means and desirable ends by providing a leg up based on disadvantage itself, looking at economic status directly rather than race as a crude proxy. When conservative critics of affirmative action ask why it is fair for Vernon Jordan's kids to get a preference over the daughter of a white welfare mother, they unwittingly underline a profoundly progressive message: Class matters. Rather than awarding points on the basis of race, or simply judging candidates on test scores and grades, class-based affirmative action seeks to evaluate a candidate's record in light of obstacles overcome, as a better measure of true merit and potential.

Because class-based affirmative action is fundamentally fair, polls find that it is much more popular than the race-based system. For example, in a December 1997 *New York Times*/CBS poll Americans rejected racial preferences 52–35 percent but favored replacing such policies with preferences for the poor 53–37 percent. Moreover, where race-based preferences divide the interests of working-class whites and blacks in an unmistakable way, class-based preferences unite these groups in a way that will immeasurably enhance the fight for a fairer society in other areas.

Second, school integration should be redefined with a focus on economic status, so that every child in America has the right to choose to attend a middle-class public school. Today the courts have eviscerated the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and even voluntary racial integration plans are being struck down. Old Liberals and some New Democrats have been reduced to good but small education ideas—school uniforms, reduced class size,

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etc.—none of which address the fountainhead of school inequality: the inevitable difference in quality between poor and wealthy schools. Meanwhile, the right and some other New Democrats have pushed a scheme for privatizing education that most careful observers believe will further segregate the schools, by class and race, since the "choice" that conservatives talk about ultimately rests with private schools rather than with students.

It's time for a big idea in education, in which all American children are given the right to attend a public school in which the majority of students come from middle-class households. Ironically, conservative voucher advocates, by emphasizing the basic unfairness of assigning poor kids to bad local schools, have implicitly recognized that neighborhood schools can be a source of great unfairness for poor people. Instead of giving poor kids vouchers to unaccountable private schools, poor children should, in this middle-class country, be given the right to choose to attend middle-class public schools. Marrying two popular American ideas, choice and public education, economic school integration can help make good on our longstanding promise that public education should be an engine for social mobility.

How can economic school integration be achieved? Busing is a nonstarter. Far better is a mechanism known as "controlled choice," devised by Charles Willie of Harvard and Michael Alves of Brown. Parents in a given community are polled to find out what sort of school themes and pedagogical approaches they find attractive for their children (for example, a computer science theme in one school or a Montessori approach in another). All schools in the area are magnetized to reflect the community's interests, and families are given an opportunity to rank preferences among the various public school offerings. Officials then honor choices with an eye to promoting integration.

In places like Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Montclair, New Jersey, controlled choice has long been used to balance racial populations, but the structure can easily be used to balance schools by income as well, using eligibility for subsidized school lunches as a measure. This new emphasis on students' economic status—favored by communities like La Crosse, Wisconsin, Manchester, Connecticut, and Wake County (Raleigh), North Carolina—is at the cutting edge of school integration. It offers a way to address the separation of poor and middle-class children and will indirectly promote racial integration in a manner that's perfectly legal. Economic integration is easiest to implement within school district lines, but city-suburban transfer programs in Hartford, Boston, St. Louis and elsewhere provide models for interdistrict integration.

Third, the right to organize and join a labor union should be reconceptualized as a civil right, so that employers are genuinely punished if they try to fire someone for organizing activity. One of the major explanations for America's weak labor movement is the relative ease with which employers may fire employees who are engaged in union organizing. Under existing labor law, it is technically illegal to fire employees for trying to organize, but the sanctions are mild (reinstatement and back pay, usually three to four years down the line). Many employers determine that it is considerably less expensive to pay sanctions for wrongfully terminating employees than to permit the organization of a labor union.

Old Liberals have put little emphasis on discrimination against

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workers engaged in union organizing, focusing primarily on race and gender discrimination. New Democrats and conservatives have often been at war with labor. The New Liberal approach would strengthen the protections against termination by transferring jurisdiction over such issues from labor law to employment discrimination law. Specifically, Congress could amend the termination provisions of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (which today in practice protect women, people of color, the elderly and the disabled) to extend protection to workers trying to form a union. Title VII remedies are considerably stronger than protections contained in labor law and now include the possibility of punitive as well as compensatory damages.

There is also an important political advantage to thinking about union organizing as a civil right. Labor unions are not particularly popular, and as long as the issue is framed as "labor law reform" it is unlikely to move people. But if the issue is reframed in terms of civil rights—and we get beyond the question of whether people are for labor unions or against—most Americans will support the notion that an employee shouldn't be fired for a reason completely unrelated to job performance.

By taking issues of class seriously, these New Liberal ideas fill a gap left by Old Liberals, who emphasize race and gender inequality, and by conservatives (including some New Democrats), who try to downplay issues of inequality of any kind. At the same time, these ideas address economic inequality in a very American, market-oriented way that accepts competitive labor markets and meritocracy—in contrast to many traditional leftists—but tries, at long last, to make them truly fair and just.

The 2000 campaign suggests such an approach can work. When Al Gore briefly experimented with economic populism in his Democratic convention speech, he eliminated George W. Bush's double-digit advantage and surged into the lead. Had Gore been bolder on issues like education, as New Liberals advocate, he could have prevented Bush from climbing back into the race by effectively blurring issue differences and shifting the political conversation to concerns such as trust, likability and the moral failings of the Clinton Administration. Indeed, if Gore had had a stronger advantage on the education issue, he'd probably be President today.

American politics is ready for something exciting. The Third Way, as it is narrowly defined by the New Democrats, doesn't fit the bill. Worse, it can't possibly develop a strong progressive majority, since it consistently ignores or downplays the interests of the working class and moderate income voters on whom such a majority would depend. A coalition of minorities, unions and socially liberal, economically conservative upper-middle-class voters just won't cut it—either as politics or in terms of making this country live up to its potential.

A New Liberal approach, one that marries the New Democrats' effort to honor American values on social issues with the Old Liberal commitment to economic equality and justice, would be a more impassioned and productive way to approach today's problems—and more likely to build a majority coalition for economic justice over the long haul. America needs "big ideas" like the ones we've described, not a Third Way whose only real virtue is what it isn't. We can do better—much better—than that. ■

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The Pro-choice PR Problem

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER

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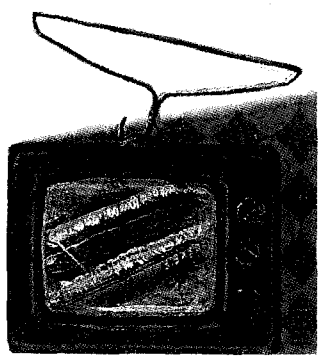

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Feel-good images aside, the ads had a calculated political purpose. They were lobbed at the kind of semi-conservative areas that could go anti-choice with a little nudge—like Arizona in 1992, during a ballot initiative campaign that aimed to outlaw abortion. It's impossible to gauge the precise impact, but the "Life. What A Beautiful Choice" ads reflected and supported a surge in grassroots anti-choice activism, from the Lambs of Christ 1991 siege of Fargo, North Dakota, to Operation Rescue's 1991 Summer of Mercy in Wichita, Kansas.

The pro-choice movement didn't have anything like that—until 1999, that is, when a coalition called the Pro-choice Public Education Project (PEP) hired the prizewinning New York agency DeVito/Verdi to design a series of ads illustrating the American "value" of choice. PEP is a consortium of more than fifty women's rights organizations, with a steering committee that includes NARAL, Planned Parenthood and the Ms. Foundation. If you live in New York City, you can't have missed its first set of ads—posters consisting of a black and white image with red type,

Jennifer Baumgardner, the author, with Amy Richards, of Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future *(Farrar, Straus & Giroux) helped organize the History in Action speakout on abortion. Research support for this article was provided by a grant from the Open Society Institute.*

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prominently displayed in subways and on buses throughout the city. (DeVito/Verdi got the pro-choice artist Barbara Kruger's permission to imitate her style.) The ads illustrate the sexism and apathy behind the erosion of abortion rights. For example, "77 percent of anti-abortion leaders are men," reads one poster, featuring a photo of dour old white patriarchs. "100 percent of them will never be pregnant." Another, in which a tattooed and pierced 20something gazes up at the camera, asks provocatively, "You think you can do what you want with your body? Think again." A new series of subway posters just about to be launched contains images that vividly recall the back alley.

These campaigns are one response to what could be described as the pro-choice movement's growing PR problem: The number of young people who say they support abortion rights has declined every year except one since 1990, according to a well-regarded annual UCLA study of incoming freshmen. There are more pro-choice than anti-choice Americans, yet many of the people who support abortion rights don't appear to feel the need to fight to insure those rights. For example, nearly two-thirds of the respondents to a Lake Snell Perry survey conducted in late 1999 strongly favored *Roe v. Wade*. Yet when asked if they'd be "worried if the next President tried to overturn *Roe v. Wade* through Supreme Court appointments," less than half said they'd lose any sleep over it. Chads and butterfly ballots aside, that carefree attitude was confirmed in the last election. One of Bush's first acts as President was to reactivate the global gag rule, cutting off US aid to overseas clinics that provide information on abortion. And, the National Abortion Rights Action League reports, more than 435 restrictions on abortion were brought before state legislators in 2000.

A majority of Americans are pro-choice, yet many who support abortion rights don't appear to feel the need to fight to insure them.

PEP ads attempt to reckon with the biggest gripe having to do with young people and abortion today—that young women tend to view reproductive freedom as their "birthright." This statement needs some deconstruction: Most younger women were born after *Roe* and thus with the right to an abortion (*ergo*, it is their birthright). The problem is that young women are asked to get anxious about what is, in many ways, a hypothetical situation. What if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned? What if your only choice was to bear a child you don't want or go to a back-alley butcher? "You can't just go out and say to young women and men, 'these are the threats, it's so awful, go do something about it,'" says Marion Sullivan, a former pollster and legislative aide who directed PEP until this past summer. PEP's survey of 1,000 women age 16 to 25 suggested that young women are more likely than the population as a whole to call themselves pro-choice, yet also very likely to define choice broadly—and to tolerate restrictions. "We have to reach young women where they are," says Sullivan. "If they say they are pro-choice for others and 'pro-life' for themselves, it's our job to educate them that supporting these restrictions makes them 'pro-life' on behalf of others, too."

"I don't have a gripe with the ads—who would?" says Annie Keating, a staffer at Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health who worked at NARAL-NYC for many years. "It's the priorities. Frankly, ads and electoral work are not going to sustain a movement, and no one will fund an activist campaign around limited access."

Indeed, in a movement with scarce resources, the cost of placing even a few prime-time ads can be a huge drain, crowding out critical organizing projects. "The actual cost per ad is incredibly high," confirms Marion Sullivan. "It's a multimillion-dollar campaign, and it costs a lot to have a great firm." DeVito/Verdi did pro bono work for eight months, but the printing of the subway posters alone cost $15,000. Typically, a single thirty-second TV spot costs around $300,000 to produce (although the PEP ads were done for "considerably less," according to Ellis Verdi, the president of DeVito/Verdi). That's before buying the expensive airtime, magazine and newspaper real estate, or space in subways and on the sides of buses. NARAL alone spent $7.5 million during the last election cycle, including $1.5 million for an ad opposing Ralph Nader (targeted to the half-dozen or so states in which he was endangering Gore).

Meanwhile, other pro-choice organizations, eschewing the blare of advertising, are dedicating themselves to the grassroots organizing techniques that have worked for the feminist movement in the past. Last April, the day taxes were due and the A16 protesters were raising a ruckus in our nation's capital, Chrystal Plati addressed a room of forty alternative-looking female students at American University, testifying about an urgent campaign for access to reproductive choice. Plati is a 27-year-old Cypriot-American with glossy brown hair and apple cheeks. She is employed as the executive director of Choice USA, a nonprofit public education organization founded by Gloria Steinem and others in 1991, the year after *Rust v. Sullivan* imposed the gag rule on US clinics that received federal funds, meaning abortion couldn't be mentioned as an option.

Plati looks at organizing to protect reproductive choice as a grassroots affair. The process is this: Choice USA's staff of ten women makes as many campus visits as they can. They network with existing organizations, conduct sixty or so leadership trainings annually and emerge with a few hundred, maybe a few thousand, new and well-trained organizers every few years. Those organizers then train more people in their communities, who in turn train more people. In this way, the force of dedicated pro-choice activists increases multifold, much in the way Amway gets its salespeople.

At American University, Amy Ray and Emily Saliers (better known as the rock/folk duo the Indigo Girls) and Karen O'Connor, a professor at AU and author of a book about the abortion struggle, joined Plati on the dais, fielding questions from a knowledgeable crew of students. The Q & A and the fundraising concert later that night drew a sizable crowd. "The students' association that we spoke to told me they want to start a chapter of Choice USA here," Plati said later, clearly pleased. Choice USA currently has twenty-five chapters in different stages of development.

"I think we need a lot of different tactics—media and organizing need to go hand in hand," said Plati the day after she got back from conducting leadership training in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

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On the days that she can get to school safely, she dreams of becoming a doctor and helping her people, but unlike most children her age in America, she has already learned enough about reality to understand that this will remain only a dream.

Although her parents make sure that she has enough food and clothing, she has learned that it has become more difficult for them to support her and her brothers since her father lost his income last month. She remembers seeing him cry when his brother came by to tell him that the occupying soldiers had bulldozed the olive trees planted by his great-grandfather.

"EVERY CHILD HAS THE INHERENT RIGHT TO LIFE."
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989 -

Like all children, she knows the sounds of rain and birds, but she has also learned to tell the difference between the sounds of an American M-16 firing live ammunition and an American M-16 firing rubber-coated steel bullets.

Her vocabulary at age 11 is very advanced. It includes words like "torture" and "interrogation," which she learned when her brother was arrested for protesting against the military occupation.

Since Apache helicopter gunship began attacking her town last October, she has been wetting her bed. She dreams each night of monsters in the sky.

She listens to her brothers talking in front of the television each evening. They do not understand why America shipped 35 helicopters to the occupying army, knowing that they were being used against civilians.

She has learned that some questions do not have easy answers. As a major sponsor of her 'education' -- the result of massive and uncritical US support of the government that is militarily occupying her country -- we wonder if you could make it any easier for her to understand?

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- Palestine Right of Return Coalition: www.al-awda.org
- Defence for Children International/Palestine Section: www.dci-pal.org
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- Defence for Children International/Palestine Section, #050014, Union Bank for Savings and Investment, Ramallah Branch #83/43146, Routing No.: 02-901-050014.
- Early Childhood Resource Center, #661118-710, Arab Bank, Al-Balad Branch, Ramallah.
- The Palestinian Counseling Center, #33/505/120110/00, Cairo-Amman Bank, Ramallah, Al-Ahlieh College Branch #802.

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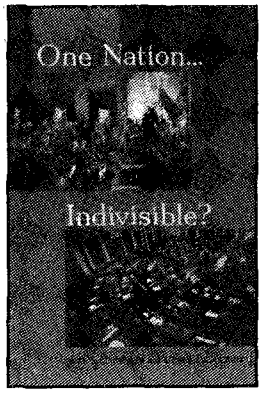

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Sara S. Chapman and Ursula S. Colby

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"Look, I'm going to be really honest," she says. "The bottom line is that all of this money is going to a PEP ad campaign, and we are competing for that same money, just to get information into the hands of women who need it." Choice USA—which has a handful of staffers who all make in the $26,000 to $35,000 range, and fifteen interns some of whom get small stipends—had its plate full that month. They were helping to launch CARE, a coalition-based Campaign for Access and Reproductive Equity, which focuses on prohibitive measures that keep poor women from getting abortion and contraception services. In other words, CARE is an activist campaign built around limited access. (CARE has one staff member—the activist Leslie Watson—and has organized eighteen campus chapters.)

A few days after I met with Plati, Ellis Verdi screened a sixty-second commercial the agency had just completed for PEP. The idea was that commercials would "take PEP up to the next level," in terms of message and medium. In a room stuffed with industry awards, I viewed their minutelong masterpiece: A college-age biracial girl walks while Beth Gibbons from the trip-hop band Portishead sings plaintively, "We got a war to fight here." She is shadowed by three dour patriarchs who look a lot like Congressmen. As she goes about her business, every channel, meal and garment the woman selects is changed by the gang of old white guys to what they think she should have. In the final image, the girl is standing in a very frumpy Laura Ashley dress the guys chose for her. She looks trapped. The ad was amazing. Too bad it isn't on TV. In fact, it was rejected by NBC, ABC, Fox and CBS. According to an article by Jennifer Pozner in *Extra!*, all four offered similar explanations: that it was too "controversial" and that advocacy is not appropriate on network television. (The networks did, on the other hand, accept the anti-choice ads in the early 1990s.) To date, the PEP ad has aired only on one Fox affiliate in San Francisco.

Even if it had been shown nationwide, would a TV ad intended to raise consciousness have had any lasting effect on the political reality of choice? Doubtful, especially since ads don't address the incremental encroachments on choice that affect women in the age of *Roe*. The PEP ads aren't about being unable to pay for an abortion or how parental consent laws might be at the root of the grisly "prom mom" cases. "The problem with these ad campaigns that don't directly relate to organizing is that there is no way to follow up or build on them," Chrystal Plati told me. You have your Hallmark moment, "but then what?" NARAL president Kate Michelman concedes, "It's not effective by itself, without the follow-up and grassroots piece." But, she argues, "if you don't reach them, then you can never really count on activating them."

The trouble is that the "grassroots piece" often ends up being an afterthought. The DeVito/Verdi posters were made available to local affiliates to use, but merely having fresh propaganda is unlikely to do much to swell the ranks of, say, Planned Parenthood of Appleton, Wisconsin, nor did it succeed in electing the pro-choice presidential candidate. And, although the PEP television spot *is* powerful to watch, without an activist pro-choice grassroots beneath it—without even the ability to get on the air—it can't have the impact to justify its steep price tag. The biggest difference between the anti-choice ads and the pro-choice ones

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is that the former came after a visible, militant anti-choice movement had emerged. PEP is approaching the problem from the other direction: trying to create a movement from ads, hoping to invigorate the couch potatoes.

Efforts to engage young women more directly in the struggle for abortion rights and to learn from them are therefore essential. This past October, for instance, an intergenerational group of feminists called History in Action sponsored an intergeneration abortion speakout and teach-in at New York's Judson Memorial Church, the site of a historic abortion referral service. Thirty years ago, young radical feminists known as Redstockings organized a legendary speakout after interrupting an "expert" abortion hearing (consisting of fourteen men and a nun). Their novel idea was that the women who have to get abortions are the "real experts." At the recent speakout, well-known activists like Rosalyn Baxandall and Florence Rice revisited their own illegal abortions (hideous experiences, all), and Ellen Willis, an original Redstocking, explained that it wasn't until women organized on their own behalf that New York abortion law was liberalized. Then younger women talked about their post-*Roe* procedures. The legal abortions were, of course, safer, but the difficult experiences these women described surprised the women who had fought to legalize abortion. One of the last speakers was 20-year-old Lebwah Sykes, the membership/network coordinator of the Third Wave Foundation, one of the three national organizations that fund abortions for women, devoting $18,000 directly to grants for that purpose last year. (Third Wave funds only women under 30.) The majority of calls Sykes gets are for second-trimester abortions; the reason these young women wait is that they have to raise the money. "Often the woman has already gotten a second job," says Sykes, "but realizes a month or two later that she is not going to earn the money fast enough, and then we get called."

Meanwhile, some new ads appeared in the New York City subways this past fall. This time the anti-choice organization that sponsored them didn't go for happy grownups relishing the cozy wonder of having children. They went for pictures of fully-developed fetuses. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
the *South China Morning Post* that it's impossible to do reliable audits in China: "The factories always manage to find a way around the auditors." We're also happy SAI is broadly trying to improve the lot of workers in China, but certifying factories there implies that they meet the criteria of free association in SAI's high-minded code, which they clearly do not. We don't see how "parallel means," whatever they are (and they sound like company unions), could possibly be a substitute for independent organizing.

As for Tepper Marlin's "economic argument," we're always amused when NGO directors suggest they know more about running businesses than managers. If profits are fatter when workers are well paid and well fed, why are there so many miserably exploited people in the world? Businesses pay higher wages only when they're forced to. LIZA FEATHERSTONE
DOUG HENWOOD

'GO TO IT, O JAZZMEN'

Whately, Mass.

■ Why put up with all the punditry and spiel in Ken Burns's *Jazz* [Gene Santoro, "All That Jazz," Jan. 29], when the photos, film clips and musical sequences are so wonderful? After all, this is the digital age of free-for-all pirating of images and sound. Just record each episode of *Jazz* on your VCR (fess up...you're already doing that, aren't you?). Then acquire cheap (or even free) digital video-editing software for your home computer. Load the footage onto your hard drive. Then eliminate the interminable "talking heads" (I'd get rid of all the Wynton Marsalis and keep most of the Gary Giddins, some Stanley Crouch and a few other odds and ends). Assemble your favorite clips into the sequences you like (say, a full hour of Louis Armstrong photos, film clips and music). You can do this over and over again in whatever order you like. In fact, it's this kind of cut and paste that makes up Burns's filmmaking technique, no? DAVID MAXCY

Evanston, Ill.

■ Gene Santoro makes a minor factual error in his review of Ken Burns's *Jazz*. Burns's *Baseball* does not stop in 1970. An entire episode is devoted to post-1970 developments. I was on the film's advisory board. There's a segment on the 1986 World Series, when Boston was one out away from the championship in game six but lost to the Mets on a wild pitch and an error. At the final preview screening my friend Ken, a die-hard Red Sox fan, left the room. He still couldn't bear to look. BERNARD A. WEISBERGER

SANTORO REPLIES

New York City

■ My slip is showing, but it's Freudian. *Baseball*'s final episode was as much of a mess as *Jazz*'s. GENE SANTORO

DEAD-WRONG POET?

New York City

■ I love Calvin Trillin's poems. Who could forget "Norm, Norm, big as a dorm" and "Al D'Amato, sleazeball obbligato"? Brilliant! But this Nader thing has got to stop ["Silver Linings," Jan. 22]. Nader took votes from Gore, sure, but he also got Republican, libertarian and independent votes. Yet somehow *these* votes, as opposed to Democrats who voted for G. Dubya, made the difference. I don't buy it. Meanwhile, the "liberal" Joe Biden, who voted to confirm Antonin Scalia and who couldn't stop eleven colleagues from defecting for Clarence Thomas, supported John Ashcroft at first. Hmm... What rhymes with Delaware—nice new hair? Cynically aware? We'll decide what's fair? Spines in us are rare?

Nader, an important voice, like Trillin's own, has informed so many about so much for so long. *Basta!* CHRIS PEDRZO TRAKAS

Cherry Hill, N.J.

Calvin Trillin has a gift
For skewering those with whom he's miffed.
His caustic rhyming the right wing singes,
As he goes snark-hunting in their fringes.
His targets tend to represent
Insiders of the Establishment.

Which is why I wonder at his pique
At Ralph O'Green, who had the cheek
To charge both parties with selling out
To corporate cash and controlling clout.
Trillin's focus seems less than keen
When he waxes snide at Ralph O'Green.
JACK HINGER

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Ashcroft, Whitman, Norton and Watt
Mr. Trillin has bones to pick with this lot.
I agree with his gripes; they mirror mine,
But why blame Nader for Dems' lack of spine?

50 Dems ignored the Black Caucus ordeal
(Senate fetes might lose their warm feel).
I know why he puts blame on Nader alone:
It's easier than rhyming 50 names in a poem.
SAMANTHA BERG

EMENDATION

■ The right to vote in New York State is not restored automatically to a felon, as reported in Gregory Palast's "Florida's 'Disappeared Voters'" [Feb. 5]. After prison, the felon is issued a certificate by the Department of Corrections, which he/she can then present to the Board of Elections to be re-entered on the voting rolls.

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THE ISSUES

The Nation.
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BOOKS & THE ARTS

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Vietnam: 'Quagmire' Quackery

DAVID RUDENSTINE

OUR VIETNAM: The War 1954–1975. By A.J. Langguth. Simon & Schuster. 766 pp. $35.

Another book on the Vietnam War? Yes, and one well worth our attention. Enough time has now passed that A.J. Langguth's *Our Vietnam: The War 1954–1975* serves not only as a wonderful addition to the rich and diverse literature on the war but as a good vehicle for revisiting and better understanding a tragedy of profound dimension. It is also an excellent one-volume introduction to the subject for those to whom this two-decade national experience is mainly a historical episode—and a useful lens through which to view the new Administration of George W. Bush as it begins to deal with military and national security issues.

Langguth is not a professional historian who approaches the Vietnam War merely through archives and secondary sources; he is a seasoned journalist who was on the ground in Vietnam for the *New York Times* when US combat troops began fighting in large numbers. Initially as a reporter and then as the paper's Saigon bureau chief, Langguth covered the war during this transformative period of 1964–65. He returned to Vietnam in 1968 to report on the aftermath of the Tet offensive, and then in 1970 to report on the US invasion of Cambodia. In preparing *Our Vietnam* he made five trips to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, where he writes he was "warmly received by Vietcong officers and lifelong Communist politicians."

Langguth's firsthand experiences in Vietnam help infuse this anecdotally rich chronological narrative with a vividness and immediacy that propel the reader through nearly 700 pages of history. It is disappointing that he did not write a concluding chapter or two in which to reflect on the longer-term meanings and consequences of the war. But, to his credit, he does cover the war not only from the American perspective but also from the vantage points of the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong. Langguth stays out of the way of his story—as he states, "My goal was simply a straightforward narrative that would let readers draw their own conclusions"—but makes his own point of view quite clear in the book's final paragraph: "North Vietnam's leaders had deserved to win. South Vietnam's leaders had deserved to lose.

David Rudenstine, author of The Day the Presses Stopped: A History of the Pentagon Papers Case *(California) and other books, is a visiting fellow in the Law and Public Affairs Program at Princeton University.*

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And America's leaders, for thirty years, had failed the people of the North, the people of the South, and the people of the United States."

Our Vietnam compares favorably with other books on Vietnam written by journalists that attracted wide public acclaim when published and retain distinguished and important places within the literature on the war. David Halberstam began *The Best and the Brightest* on the heels of covering the domestic turbulence created by the war during the 1968 campaign, in which he "had seen the Johnson Administration and its legatee defeated largely because of the one issue." When his book was published in 1971, US soldiers were still fighting in Vietnam and Richard Nixon was President. Thus, although Halberstam's study of how and why American leaders made decision after decision leading up to and sustaining the war remains a touchstone, he wrote of an event he was living through and for which he had limited sources.

Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam: A History* is an exceptional single-volume history of the American war in Vietnam, which Langguth almost seems to have used as a guide for his own effort. Although Karnow gives his thoroughly engaging, magisterial history a broad perspective, Langguth had access to more information because he was writing later, and his narrative provides a richer Vietnamese perspective on events. Neil Sheehan's *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* is a remarkable, at times staggering, historical account of the war. But because Sheehan uses the story of Vann's life to tell the tale—even ending with the observation that "John Vann...died believing he had won his war"—his captivating narrative is more personal than a conventional historical account.

Our Vietnam should help keep the record honest today, too, by constituting an antidote to the published memoirs of those who planned and executed the war, the most prominent being former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. In his memoir, *In Retrospect*, McNamara wrote that his "associates in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were an exceptional group: young, vigorous, intelligent, well-meaning, patriotic servants of the United States," and he wondered: How "did this group...get it wrong on Vietnam?" The mistakes, he insisted, were "mostly honest mistakes," the errors ones "not of values and intentions but of judgment and capabilities." (Langguth's chronology and evidentiary record contradict that view forcefully.)

Langguth's retelling of America's involvement in Vietnam covers already familiar ground. After the North Vietnamese defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Washington—in keeping with a cold war mentality that gripped much of the nation—promised "free elections" in South Vietnam and dispatched military personnel to train South Vietnam's army. But Vietnam was not on President Eisenhower's radar screen. When he met with President-elect John Kennedy during the transition, he drew Kennedy's attention to Laos as a potential trouble spot and made no mention of Vietnam. As the new President became focused on Vietnam, Under Secretary of State Chester Bowles—both an oracle and a lone wolf—warned (to no avail) against US military involvement there, because it would put the "prestige and power" of the United States on the line "in a remote area under the most adverse circumstances."

The theme of the war as a morass that trapped us unwittingly has proved remarkably resilient—and is patently false.

In 1961 McNamara became the Kennedy Administration's "supervisor for Vietnam," which caused many, years later, to refer to the conflict as McNamara's War. In 1962 Kennedy began to increase the number of US personnel in Vietnam. In 1963 Buddhists there were mounting a challenge to the autocratic ways of South Vietnam's Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem; indeed, that summer one Buddhist monk, Thich Quang Duc, horrified the world by burning himself to death on a Saigon street. Diem was murdered only weeks before Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963.

On to the Johnson Administration: On August 7, 1964, Congress rubber-stamped—the House vote was 416 to 0 and the Senate's was 88 to 2—an Administration-drafted resolution informally called the Tonkin Gulf Resolution (following a trumped-up incident of attack on a US vessel), which authorized the President to take "all necessary measures to repel any armed attacks against" US forces and "to prevent further aggression." A month after eight Americans were killed at the US base in Pleiku in February 1965, the United States commenced Rolling Thunder, the systematic bombing of North Vietnam, which continued (with some pauses) until October 1968. In July 1965 President Johnson committed land troops to South Vietnam, which over the next two and a half years were increased to more than 500,000.

When the United States went to war, most Americans might have said that the goal of the war was to stop the spread of Communism. But it is likely that only a small portion of them gave much thought to the meaning of that slogan as it applied to Vietnam. Moreover, a still smaller percentage probably thought carefully about how this war would actually prevent the spread of Communism, and what important interest the United States really had in doing so in South Vietnam per se. Thus, when the war began for the United States in earnest in 1965, the American public had only a wafer-thin understanding of why the nation was fighting a land war in Southeast Asia, the goals of the conflict, the dangers, whether the aims of the war were realistic and what magnitude of commitment and sacrifice might be required to see it through.

Once the war began, it dragged on from one season to the next, year after year. The public became restless and the anti-war movement became forceful. In early 1968 the North Vietnamese pulled off the stunning Tet offensive, which left the indelible image of Marines desperately fighting for their lives as they defended the US Embassy in Saigon. Washington tried to assure the American people that Tet was not a Communist victory. But George Aiken, a Republican senator from Vermont, may have expressed the public's mood best when he said sardonically: "If this is a failure, I hope the Vietcong never have a major success." In the end, Tet shredded confidence in Washington, the idea that the war was being won and the suggestion that the South Vietnamese government was anything but a corrupt puppet.

Senator Eugene McCarthy challenged President Johnson for the Democratic Party presidential nomination and stunned the nation by getting 42.2 percent of the vote in the 1968 New Hampshire presidential primary. A few weeks later, the group of so-called Wise Men advised Johnson not to escalate the war further, and days after that Johnson told the nation he would halt much of the bombing and agree to negotiations with the North Vietnamese. He added that he would not be a candidate for re-election. When the Paris Peace Talks were about to begin, the South Vietnamese refused to attend, and the North Vietnamese and US delegations settled into arguing about the shape of the table at which they would sit—and Americans

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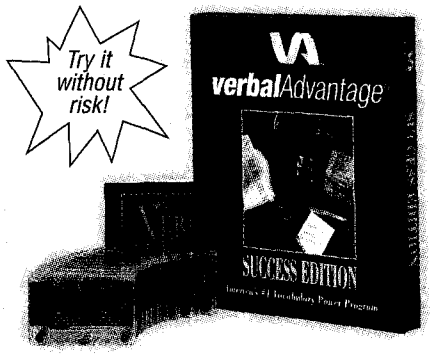

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and Vietnamese continued to die.

When Richard Nixon won the general election, he didn't consider an immediate cessation of hostilities. Instead, he inaugurated a policy—eventually termed "Vietnamization"—of gradually withdrawing ground troops. At the same time, the war from the air was enlarged as he ordered the secret bombing of Communist bases in Cambodia. But the war did wind down, if slowly, and the last US combat troops left South Vietnam in March 1973. Rather than face an impeachment trial, Nixon resigned the presidency in 1974, which left Gerald Ford as President when the North Vietnamese smashed through the gates of Independence Palace in Saigon and defeated the South Vietnamese in 1975.

Vietnam was a tragedy of immense proportions, and although it is regrettable that Langguth does not try to distill its causes, his carefully presented evidence makes it plain that the only arguable United States national security interest in Vietnam was the cold war policy of containing Communism to ward off the oft-invoked "domino effect." But even in this regard, Langguth's account indicates that those who planned and executed the war believed that the primary interest of the United States had less to do with containing Communism than it did with some vague idea of national prestige. As the respected John McNaughton, assistant secretary for international security affairs, stated in a 1965 memorandum to McNamara, "70%" of the purpose of US military intervention during the transition was "to avoid a humiliating US defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor)."

Langguth's account also firmly rules out the idea that Vietnam was a quagmire that US leaders stumbled into unaware of the risks. The "quagmire thesis" first made its mark on public consciousness when David Halberstam wrote *The Making of a Quagmire* in 1964, maintaining that well-intentioned, idealistic American leaders blundered their way in. After that, many were responsible for restating and elaborating the theme, but it was probably Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., the prominent historian and former Kennedy aide, who gave the thesis one of its most quoted expressions, in *The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941–1966*, published in 1967.

When I did my research for *The Day the Presses Stopped: A History of the Pentagon Papers Case*, it seemed that the Pentagon Papers had smashed the quagmire thesis to smithereens. The Pentagon Papers were a massive, 7,000-page, top-secret military history of America's involvement in Vietnam from the end of World War II to 1968, which McNamara had commissioned in 1967 and which Daniel Ellsberg leaked to the *New York Times* (and the *Washington Post* also ran) in 1971. They consisted of government documents embodying key decisions that led up to the war and sustained it, as well as accounts written by so-called Pentagon historians whose task it was to write a narrative of the decisions and events as recorded in the government documents that the study comprised.

But the theme of a morass that had trapped us unwittingly proved resilient. Weeks after the Pentagon Papers became public, none other than Schlesinger stepped forward to defend the quagmire claim against attacks on it by Ellsberg and others. Schlesinger wrote that "the Vietnam adventure was marked much more by ignorance, misjudgment, and muddle than by foresight, awareness, and calculation." He concluded that "I cannot find persuasive evidence that our generals, diplomats, and Presidents were all that sagacious and farsighted that they heard how hopeless things were, agreed with what they heard, and then 'knowingly' defied prescient warnings in order to lurch ahead into what they *knew* was inevitable disaster."

Even today that view continues to have currency, but Langguth will have none of this. He establishes not only that ranking US officials time and again perceived the dangers but that they were simultaneously unconvinced that the United States had any meaningful national defense or security interests in Vietnam that would have warranted war. Langguth's portrait is one of these same leaders feeling hemmed in by domestic political considerations. They believed that the harm to themselves at home (as well as perhaps to their party) would be too substantial if they were to change the direction of the cold war–inspired policies that were spawned at the end of World War II, and gradually but relentlessly supported the American military involvement in Southeast Asia.

Consider three incidents recounted by Langguth as illustrative of this theme. President Kennedy told his scheduling secretary, Kenny O'Donnell, in 1963 that "withdrawal in 1965 would make him one of the most unpopular presidents in history. He would be damned everywhere as a Communist appeaser. 'But I don't care,' Kennedy said. 'If I tried to pull out completely now from Vietnam we would have another Joe McCarthy red scare on our hands, but I can do it after I'm reelected. So we had better

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make damned sure that I *am* reelected.'"

During a 1964 taped telephone conversation between President Johnson and Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, Russell said, "I don't see how we're ever getting out [of Vietnam] without fighting a major war with the Chinese and all of them down there in those rice paddies and jungles. I just don't see it. I just don't know what to do." Johnson answered: "That's the way I've been feeling for six months." When Johnson asked Russell, "How important is it to us?" and Russell answered, "Not important a damned bit," the President did not disagree. Johnson also told Russell that he did not think people knew much about Vietnam and that "they care a hell of a lot less." Toward the end of the conversation, Johnson speculated, "They'd impeach a President that runs out, wouldn't they?"

Langguth also reports a telling incident just before Christmas 1970, when President Nixon told Henry Kissinger, his National Security Adviser, that he "considered making 1971 the last year of America's involvement in Vietnam." Nixon said that he planned to tour South Vietnam in April 1971, reassure South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu about the consequences of the impending US withdrawal and then come home and "announce that America's role in Vietnam was over." Kissinger protested. He argued that after the withdrawal, the "Communists could start trouble" in 1972, which meant that the "Nixon administration would pay the political price in the 1972 presidential election." Kissinger advised, as Langguth recounts, that "Nixon should promise instead only that he would get American troops out by the end of 1972. That schedule would get him safely past his re-election. Nixon saw the wisdom in Kissinger's argument that guaranteeing his second term would require American soldiers to go on dying."

It would be overreaching to assert that Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon made defense and national security decisions solely in response to their own perceived political fortunes, but the evidence does make it clear that their decisions were greatly influenced by the consideration. And to accept that domestic political concerns played such a pivotal role in the US war in Vietnam, which cost 57,000 American and an estimated 2 million Vietnamese lives, constitutes a profound challenge to the capacity of a democratic order to fashion and implement moral and prudent policies.

As damning as it is to accept the degree to which personal and party interests prompted policies that led to such a protracted war, it would be a mistake to think of the Democrats and Republicans who made those decisions as somehow uniquely flawed. It is unlikely that the qualities of mind, temperament and character of current and future political leaders will be more vital, wise or resourceful than those who occupied high office between 1954 and 1975. One must accept that the United States is not likely to have leaders who have the vision, the ability to communicate and that rare quality of leadership that will allow them to reshape what is politically possible by fundamentally altering (after they have helped formulate it) an entrenched mindset that dominates a nation.

Although Langguth's *Our Vietnam* does not confront this conundrum, his vivid retelling of the American war there allows us to consider once again the role played by the antiwar movement in bringing the war to an end. In so many ways, the movement was chaotic and ineffective. But can one imagine what would have been the course of the conflict if there had been no movement? Would the US combat forces in Vietnam have risen to a million? Would the United States have used nuclear weapons? Would the United States have supported a war of attrition for another three or four years? The movement was the countervailing

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force to, in its words, "the system" that made and sustained the war. The movement restrained Johnson's buildup; it put Senator McCarthy in a position to mount a challenge to a sitting President; it pressured Nixon to find a way out of an even longer war. The movement accomplished nothing quickly or easily—it couldn't. It was battling a cold war sensibility implanted in the American mind since the end of World War II. What is so astounding, therefore, is not that the movement did not achieve more, but that it achieved so much.

Just as a people may set constraints on the political process that politicians experience as a prison without walls, the people may also be, as they were during the Vietnam War, the system's last best hope. And if that is true, then the people need to be fully engaged as the inexperienced President Bush confronts an array of defense and national security issues: When and under what circumstances should the United States commit ground forces to a situation comparable to Kuwait or Bosnia? Should the United States deploy a national missile defense system? Is the United States meddling in a civil war in Colombia under the guise of advancing a hapless "war on drugs"? If dangerous weapons of mass destruction are identified with certainty in a nation considered a threat, what is the appropriate response?

Langguth's *Our Vietnam* reminds us time and again of the importance of skepticism and distrust in assessing defense and national security policies. One anecdote about that engagement makes the point memorably. In August 1964 Johnson was widely praised for ordering airstrikes against North Vietnam in the wake of the Tonkin Gulf incident. The influential *New York Times* columnist James Reston wrote that "even men who had wondered how Johnson would act under fire 'were saying that they now had a commander-in-chief who was better under pressure than they had ever seen him.'" There were not many dissenting voices, but I.F. Stone was one. Referring to the right-wing Republican presidential candidate, who criticized Johnson's policies toward North Vietnam as insufferably weak, Stone wrote in his weekly: "Who was Johnson trying to impress? Ho Chi Minh? Or Barry Goldwater?" Stone's response in this pivotal event is a vital example of a frame of mind that would serve the nation well if it were widely adopted. Any book that becomes a vessel for meaningful re-examination of a national tragedy is exceptional and demands broad attention. And that is what Langguth's book is, and does. ■

SDS's Other Wars

JIM RUSSELL

REBELS WITH A CAUSE

With over 100,000 members in college and university chapters, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was the largest and most significant of the 1960s New Left organizations in the United States. While its history has been told before in a few well-known titles—Kirkpatrick Sale's *SDS*, James Miller's *"Democracy Is in the Streets,"* Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties* and Thomas Powers's *Diana* among them—SDS is finally getting visual treatment as well with Helen Garvy's intriguing film *Rebels With a Cause*.

Garvy, a former assistant national secretary of SDS, reveals an insider's history of the organization with her film, built around the voices of twenty-eight of its leading activists, including Tom Hayden, Carl Oglesby, Casey Hayden and Bernardine Dohrn. And despite a sparse use of visual images, narration and music, Garvy has created an affecting picture. She avoids the "talking heads" danger inherent in documentary technique through tight editing—one interviewee picks up right where another leaves off. The effect is that of a seamless and compelling narration to the unfolding history and issues.

While other films about the '60s capture the energy and excitement of student rebellion with footage of protests and confrontation, this one captures the thought that went into the activism. It is the best film record we have of the intellectual motivations of the New Left in the United States.

The SDS story as Garvy tells it begins with its founding in 1960 as an organization concerned with racism, poverty, democratization of American society, the cold war and the danger of nuclear confrontation. SDS sought to identify itself with the left but avoid the traditional leftist pitfalls of sectarianism and dogmatism. The Port Huron Statement, drafted two years later by Tom Hayden, began with an expression of the generational anxieties to which SDS was responding: "We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit."

Despite the great concerns and ambitions of its founders, SDS was at first nothing more than a loose network of activist friends on a few college campuses (Michigan and Swarthmore, in particular) and in New York City. Then the contacts began to expand; I first heard about SDS in 1963 as a freshman at the University of Oklahoma, where we were concerned with ending both segregation in the surrounding community and compulsory ROTC on campus.

The most important initial organizing thrust of SDS was to serve as a Northern student adjunct to the Southern civil rights movement. But it quickly moved from supporting the Southern struggle to attempting to spark parallel struggles in the North. Through its Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) the organization embarked on a series of ambitious community organizing campaigns in nine Northern cities with the avowed aim of creating an interracial movement of the poor. "We were very serious organizers," Sharon Jeffrey says in the film. "We intended to change the world." Within a couple of years, though, the escalating Vietnam War began to divert the energies of SDS away from its domestic community-organizing agenda. The ERAP began to wither, as did a number of civil rights projects in the South.

Nineteen sixty-five was a critical year in this transition. On April 17 SDS held the first March on Washington to protest US intervention in Vietnam. Exceeding all expectations, 25,000 people participated. Then more than 100,000 took part in the October 15 International Days of Protest and the November 27 second March on Washington sponsored by SDS and a range of other organizations. The number of SDS chapters on campuses multiplied from a few dozen to well over a hundred. Thousands of new members joined up. National and international media descended upon the Chicago national office, where I was working at the time, thinking that they had located the epicenter of the antiwar move-

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ment. In reality, by this time, SDS was just one of many organizations responding to a groundswell of opposition to the war.

The war was the new reality. At this time, SDS was actively struggling against America's foreign policy as well as its racial and economic policies at home. Then, in December 1965, Casey Hayden and Mary King, both highly regarded organizers and informal leaders from the civil rights movement, opened up yet another front. They circulated a letter, titled "Sex and Caste," that called upon women in SDS (and the movement in general) to initiate dialogues over "the problems between men and women." This call added gender to the inequalities of race and class that the organization sought to redress. It also marked the beginning of women's activism in the movement.

For the next four years, SDS played a prominent role in the growth of a free-wheeling and militant new radicalism. But the movement defied any kind of central control, and a succession of national SDS leaders struggled to establish a clear role for the organization.

An initially small faction dominated by the Progressive Labor Party (PL), a pro-China splinter from the Communist Party, made inroads into SDS year by year, and its opponents among the national leadership grew increasingly rattled as they sought to fashion nonsectarian alternatives to PL's brand of Marxism-Leninism. The 1969 SDS convention in Chicago broke into warring factions—one controlled by PL, another by the emergent Weather Underground and others, including the Revolutionary Youth Movement. The Weather faction controlled the national SDS office until early 1970, then closed it down before going underground. That marked the formal end of the organization.

In many ways SDS succumbed to the very sectarianism that it had sought to avoid. "There was a process of one-upmanship on rhetoric," Bob Ross says, "that eventually one-upped us right out of touch with either students or the mass of the people."

Most of the tendencies of the radical politics of the seventies, including clandestine guerrilla organizations and the attempts to build Marxist-Leninist parties, can be traced from the breakup of SDS. Some members, however, came out of SDS committed to electoral politics and moving the Democratic Party to the left. A significant number also continued to pursue grassroots organizing strategies.

Although the SDS name continued to be employed by PL for several years, it was not the same organization and has never been recognized as such by original SDS activists. Consequently, Garvy does not include the PL "SDS" in her treatment. However, she does describe the Weather Underground experience, since its leading activists had roots in SDS. A number of these, including Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers and Cathy Wilkerson, speak in the film.

Garvy treads cautiously in this part of *Rebels*. Since the Weather campaign of terrorism continues to be an issue of sore dispute among SDS veterans, Garvy tells two sides of this story. She includes both a point-blank denunciation of the Weathermen as unrepresentative of the movement by former SDS president Todd Gitlin and a sympathetic interpretation—that the Weather tactics grew out of frustration with the failure of large-scale marches and other nonviolent tactics to stop the war. "In some ways," Jane Adams says, "I felt that they were my agent despite the fact that I didn't agree with them. I could fully understand the frustration out of which their rage came."

But not all of SDS's long-term survival problems were due to its internal dynamics. Documents released through the Freedom

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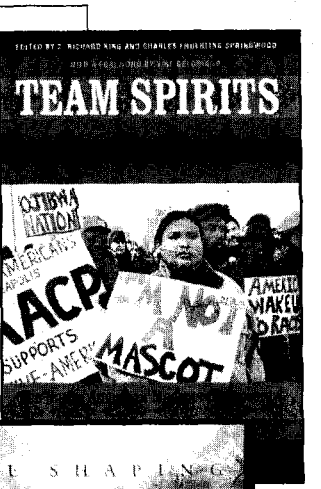

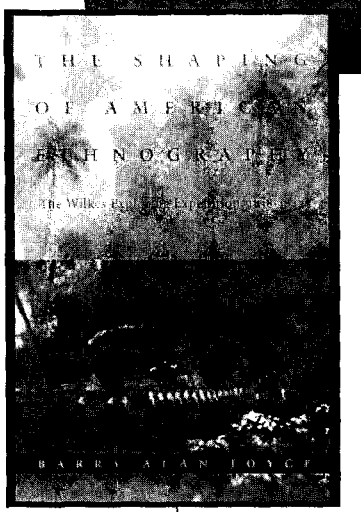

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of Information Act confirm what was widely suspected then: The FBI and other government agencies kept close tabs on SDS and disrupted its activities through the FBI counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO). The full extent to which government agencies contributed to destroying the organization's effectiveness remains unknown. There are still-unreleased files, and, as is typical, much of the content of the released material is blacked out.

Garvy situates SDS as a phenomenon of homegrown radicalism in the great tradition of American grassroots democratic movements. What she chooses not to show is that SDS was also a phenomenon of the American left.

SDS was as much an outgrowth of, and entangled in, the left-wing political tradition as it was a spontaneous response to issues of the time. A number of its original activists came from left-wing, including Communist, families. The organization began as the student affiliate of the cold war social-democratic League for Industrial Democracy (LID), which had a long history of intraleft warfare against Communism.

The LID parentage proved increasingly problematic as SDS got older, especially as the Vietnam War became a major issue. (Leading members of LID supported the war.) The final straw that broke the relationship came at the 1965 national convention when SDS voted to remove a clause in its constitution that barred Communists from membership. SDS's "anti-anti-Communist" stance could not be tolerated by the profoundly anti-Communist LID, and a formal separation was negotiated a couple of months later.

Throughout its history, SDS saw itself as an alternative to the traditional left-wing Trotskyist, Maoist and Soviet-aligned groups, which it dismissed as sectarian and largely irrelevant to the nation's political life. (It was in SDS that I learned the difference between an "-ist" and an "-ite." You used the former for polite descriptions, the latter for ideological enemies.) Nevertheless, it had both to struggle with those groups and to participate with them in coalition activities. Thus, historical events of the left, from the split between communists and social democrats to the Sino-Soviet split (via the PL), contributed to creating the organizational environment in which SDS functioned.

Garvy can be forgiven for leaving out this part of the story in the interest of producing a film for wide consumption—how many ordinary people would want to sit through hearing SDS veterans onscreen reminiscing about their differences with Trotskyism or other leftist tendencies? Still, those differences did make up a part of the nitty-gritty struggles of the day and were a significant part of SDS history.

Rebels With a Cause can best be described as oral history in the form of a film. As such it is a faithful record—without the left-wing context—of that part of the 1960s movement. It is especially valuable as an antidote to the cynical interpretations that dismiss the 1960s activists as either misguided idealists or hedonists consumed with sex, drugs and rock and roll. But beyond establishing an accurate record, the film's contribution is its transmission of historical memory to later generations. It is an especially valuable resource for current activists who wish to link their struggles to those of the recent past.

I was therefore curious to know what this generation of students, who had not been born when the 1960s movement took place, would think of Garvy's film. There had been no overt censorship to prevent transmittal of the memory. But would other mechanisms keep students from knowing this history? Would they consider the events to be too remotely in the past to have any relevance to their lives?

I showed *Rebels With a Cause* at the university where I teach—Eastern Connecticut State, a working-class campus not at all known for student activism. As one might expect, reactions and interests varied. What I was most struck by was that while all the students had heard of the civil rights movement, many had not heard of the antiwar movement.

The media and schools have enshrined the civil rights movement, as they should, as a good example of a social movement in American history. The antiwar movement is another matter. It is largely ignored by the media and schools because it is still controversial—both in terms of whether citizens should have protested that war and, most important, for the "dangerous" example it set for how citizens might respond to present and future wars engaged in by this country.

In *Rebels With a Cause* Helen Garvy has given us a resource for keeping alive the radical memory of such dangerous examples and dreams in American history. ■

FILMS

Scarlet Letter's Last Blush

GENE SANTORO

FAITHLESS

A director, now an old man, alone, sits in his tidy house by the sea, everything in its place, the notebooks piled in their drawer, the letter opener and pen neatly on the desk. He conjures up his dead lover, an attractive actress named Marianne. She settles into the window seat, or sits in a chair opposite him, or, more rarely, strolls briefly around the room as she flashes back through her life with him and without him, by turns caustically, tenderly, revealingly, angrily. Through watery, startled, wounded, even yearning eyes, he stares at her and at himself years earlier. For entr'acte punctuation, he stares out the window toward the rolling sea, and three or four times even walks toward it. That, and a couple of Paris-from-the-rooftops shots, are among the few shifts from this movie's claustrophobic interiors and tight head shots and static camera setups. Welcome to *Faithless*. Premiered at last fall's New York Film Festival, written by Ingmar Bergman and directed by Liv Ullman, the movie takes 150 minutes, more or less, to relive one extramarital affair and its aftermath.

The setup? Marianne (the beautiful and talented Lena Endre, whose performance is one of the film's best aspects) is married to Markus (Thomas Hanzon), a conductor who's rich, powerful and handsome. They have a daughter, the saucer-eyed preteen Isabelle (Michelle Gylemo). Markus's best friend is David (Krister Henriksson), a pudgy, morose, egocentric, not-quite-unsuccessful director. One night David

Gene Santoro, author of Myself When I Am Real: The Life and Music of Charles Mingus *(Oxford), will be among those contributing film reviews while Stuart Klawans is on leave.*

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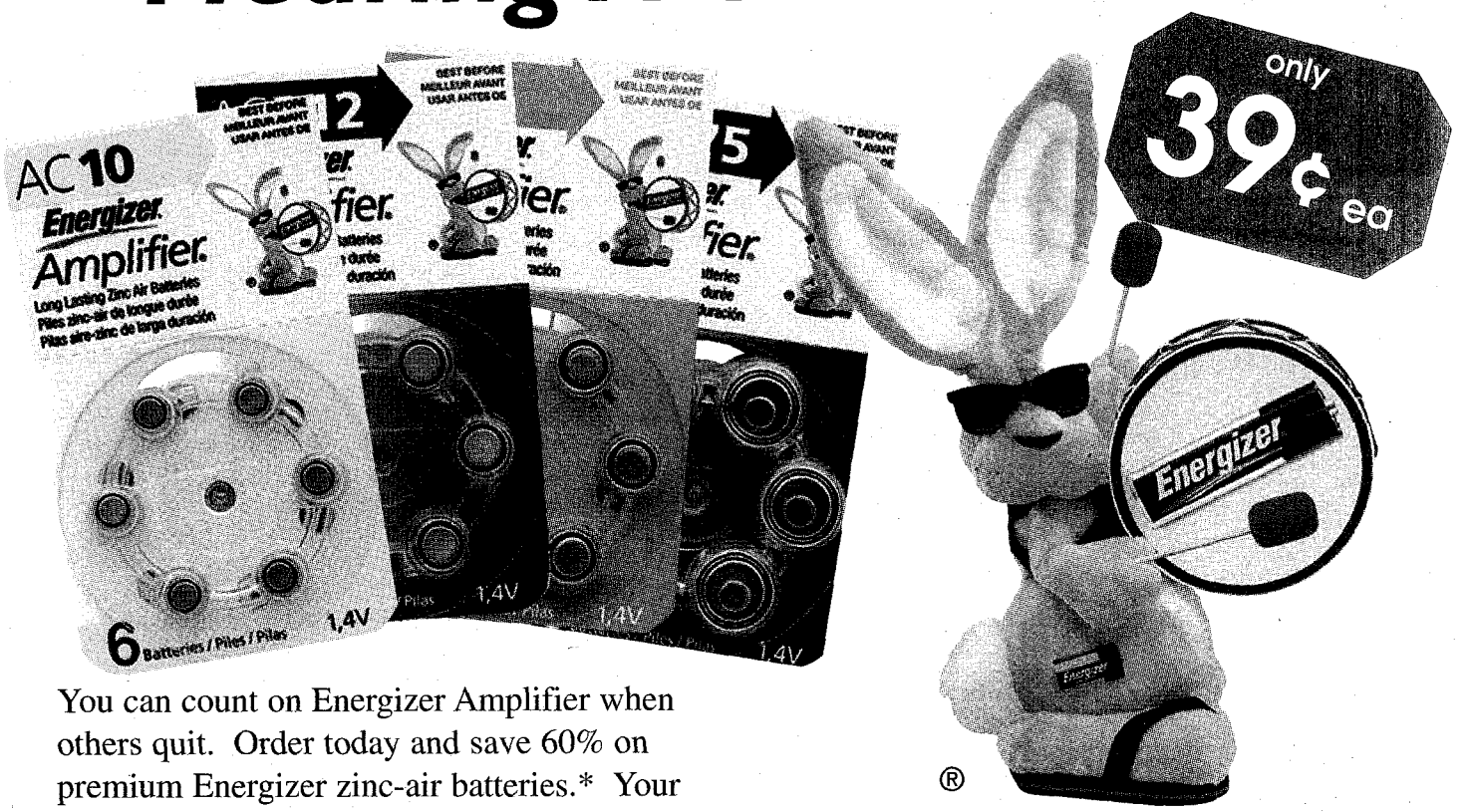

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shows up when Markus is on tour, and asks Marianne to sleep with him. She is startled, then agrees to sleep—and only that—with him. And so she does, but the seed of adultery is planted. She fantasizes about David, approaches him and kisses him on the lips (his characteristic response: "This is serious") and decides to meet him in Paris while Markus is in Detroit at a recording session. They agree to "discover" they'll be in Paris at the same time during Markus's farewell dinner, and the affair begins.

Throughout its twists and turns, angst prevails, as steady and remorseless as the unwavering camera's medium-to-close-up range, through flickering moments of sex and happiness. For the older though not much wiser David has conjured a Marianne less Eurydice than Emma Bovary. She's ironic, introspective, optimistic, yet armed with an existentialist sensibility, although somehow—it's unclear whether this reflects the general human condition or whether Marianne is yet another woman in movie-love who pays the wages of sin—she never quite manages to understand why these things are happening to her. She stays almost willfully blind to probable chains of events even when she's set them in motion herself.

Watch how she persistently teases Markus on the eve of his departure about her being with David in Paris. She nudges him into suspicion without a clue that that's what she's done—until he shows up, months later, to confront her in David's bed. In one of the film's most human and effective scenes, she and David blur between laughter and tears while Markus rages and guilt-trips and swaggers and simply stares.

From there on, things unravel relentlessly. There are Isabelle's emotional traumas; an aborted death pact between Markus and Isabelle; David's calculated outbreaks of violent jealousy (in one scene, he asks Marianne about previous lovers, then throws her around after she tells of Markus's sexual power over her); Marianne's unconvincing analyses of herself and her world (she insists to David that she likes simplicity, where he insists things must always be more complicated than they seem); her abortion of David's child after she's screwed Markus several times in one night as part of a "deal" to get custody of Isabelle (all-powerful Social Services looks askance at her future with David); and the affair's last spasms and final collapse. Like a revenge tragedy, it ends with nearly everyone dead, and the old man once more walking toward the sea, meditating on drowning.

Even compared with Bergman's 1973 TV series *Scenes From a Marriage*, there's a remarkable amount of talk here, far outweighing action. Characters ponder the links, articulated and not, between sex and death, happiness and pain, and the guilt of the past unredeemed. What, Bergman seems to ask in *Faithless*, could be more human than to blunder or float from event to event as if this particular chain of them were wrapping its way around somebody else? Maybe nothing, but it's also a bit of a trick question: Bergman is no moral relativist. Time after time he's filmed his brooding sense that moral codes as rigid and predetermined as his camera angles underlie the apparent games of chance operating the universe. It's no mere conceit that *Faithless* is made from the voices of the dead in an old man's head.

Ullmann (who, in addition to her many deservedly praised starring roles in Bergman films, played the wife, also named Marianne, in *Scenes*) has praised Bergman's hard-won willingness to face himself in this script, mentioning its autobiographical genesis. Fair enough: The film doesn't spare middle-aged David, but it also makes him the center of Marianne's story. Here it's worth noting that Bergman is very much this movie's auteur, though he hasn't directed a feature film in eighteen years. Perhaps it's unintentional, perhaps it's a larger Bergmanesque irony, but Ullmann directs in Bergman's cinematic language in much the same way Marianne, his "muse," speaks his own thoughts.

In her fourth directorial effort (her previous film, *Private Confessions*, dutifully shot another Bergman script, that one based on his parents' marriage and infidelities), Ullmann has clearly internalized her erstwhile friend and lover's deliberate, at times ponderous, pacing and pared-back camerawork, his tight shots, even his masterful flair for subtle signposts to mark a mood shift or plot turn, like changing the light or color of a scene. What is more typically Bergman than interrelations between macrocosm and microcosm?

But honesty? Aside from the nagging sense of loss that middle-aged and old David share, what does this self-described malcontent carry with him from all those grave trips down memory lane? The old man touches Marianne's face, and his own younger face too, in benediction, but it reads more like solipsism than real emotional connection.

For all its biting truths, this is a movie about talk whose talk meanders around self-examination without ever really striking self-awareness. Everyone in *Faithless* is

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trapped, by their creator's design, in a self-sealed world. Is this honesty about human reality or a kind of smug, bleak paternalism? That and its quaint take on infidelity explain why *Faithless* ultimately feels like a soap opera for highbrows. (Who else sits through movies with subtitles?) It lacquers an existentialist veneer onto Big Issues like Life and Love and Relationships and Death. But minus the larger framing issues that resonated through *Scenes* and that series' far more dramatic vicissitudes, in modern America—if not modern Scandinavia—Bergman's truths too often come off as melodramatic, heavy-handed and trite rather than timeless. We're left, in *Faithless*, with an almost medieval allegory that ultimately flattens human foibles into archetypal moral categories.

It's as if in his old age Bergman has forgotten his lessons from Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House*, where real, if inevitably frail, individuals are dramatically, provocatively shaped and bent by larger forces. *Scenes* worked best when it followed Ibsen's lead. In *Faithless*, however, Bergman, like the old David (Erland Josephson, who has played the movie Bergman before), spends a lot of time in front of the mirror. When does merciless self-examination slide imperceptibly into narcissism?

Here's my problem. If there's a line separating the later Bergman's existential dilemmas from daily infusions of TV soapsuds, *Scenes From A Marriage* helped confuse me about where that line might be. (PBS and BBC costume dramas, movies like *The English Patient* and *My Dinner with André*, Barbra Streisand, Tennessee Williams and Op-Ed pieces about media violence have the same effect on me.)

Until then, I knew I was supposed to be in awe of Bergman. I saw *The Seventh Seal* when I was a teenager, and like a good intellectual wannabe, entranced by Death the chess player, I voyaged through Bergman's *oeuvre* during high school and college. *Scenes From A Marriage* left me saying goodbye to all that. I guess I decided it was more fun, less patronizing and (in ways I didn't have to defend to myself anymore) more enlightening, even, to tune in to *An American Family*, the 1973 PBS foray into reality TV that aired at around the same time. Who remembers the Louds, Santa Barbara's favorite upper-middle-class real-life soap opera, who became inured to cameras following them through a year of their lives? One kid coming out of the closet, sex and drug problems for the others, a disintegrating marriage between

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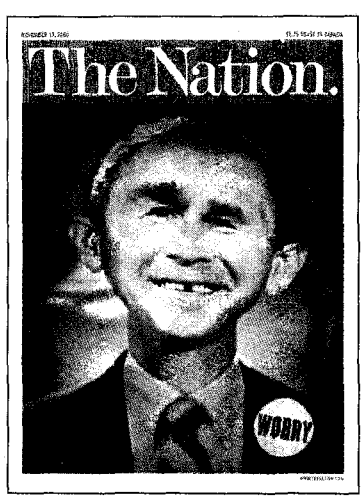

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the apparently sophisticated adults masquerading as parents and, through the bemusement and horror, some key issues of contemporary American life driving a cast of self-consciously avid talkers who grew remarkably sophisticated (if frequently self-contradictory), somehow conscious and unconscious about cameras and soundbites as their Andy Warhol moments of fame spun on and on and on...

A few years later, I was living in Italy when I saw Woody Allen's *Interiors*, his first overt homage to Bergman. My Italian was pretty good, but as I sat in the huge cold Roman theater with a smattering of chatting Italians watching the frozen, black-and-white anguish spread like molasses across the patched screen, I kept straining for punch lines that never came, making them up for myself when they didn't, finding ironies in the dubbed Italian voices emitted by actors whose accents I knew only too well. I left feeling as though I understood multiple-personality disorder from the inside—not because of the movie, exactly, but from my time in the dark spent in parallel with it.

The unintentional Brechtian effect that *Interiors* had on me extinguished whatever was left of my need or desire for Bergman's increasingly circumscribed world of angst and sin and guilt, even if filtered through Liv Ullmann's disciplined lens. That, of course, isn't their fault. But despite some fine moments, *Faithless* didn't convince me I was wrong. ■

IN OUR ORBIT

Reform Candidate

AFTER PROGRESS: American Social Reform and European Socialism in the Twentieth Century.
By Norman Birnbaum.
Oxford. 432 pp. $35.

"Of reconsiderations of Western socialism, there is no end," Norman Birnbaum writes cheekily at the opening of his new book—and immediately sets out to show us (successfully) why his is different. "The prominence of ideas on the supreme efficiency of the market, the large changes implied by the notion of globalization, are historically rather recent. They are, however, the contemporary forms of recurrent dilemmas," he declares.

With that thought in mind, Birnbaum, a *Nation* editorial board member and University Professor at Georgetown University Law School, spins out what is part comprehensive survey and part prescriptive meditation on the future of reformist impulses. Socialism "in all its forms was itself a religion of redemption," he observes, and yet, a paradox presents itself: that socialism "presupposed the kind of human nature it was intended to make possible." And it is the chasm between utopian hopes and reality that most interests Birnbaum. This is no apologia but a broad analysis of the history of progressive social change as it was carried out in Europe and America over the past century.

Some of the ground Birnbaum covers will be familiar—the appeal of socialism to writers from Auden to Dos Passos, Malraux to Mann, in a discussion of cultural modernism, for example, or his recounting Antonio Gramsci's efforts to invent an Italian Marxism that began with the cultural sphere in efforts to lead the political. Birnbaum moves broadly over the Russian Revolution and beyond, the 1930s and wartime in both Europe and the United States, the evolution (and devolution) of the welfare state, contending versions of socialism ("there is something distinctive about socialist movements in Catholic countries," he maintains, as they "become counterchurches, organized around militant secularism") and brings us up to the present moment—even to the effects of the Internet.

"Our societies are ready for a renewed public discussion of what economic and social rights are bound up with citizenship," Birnbaum concludes. Even anecdotally, he illustrates his point: The German constitutional court recently ruled that there was a "burden upon the government to ensure an equality of living standards," he notes, while in the United States the Senate bounced a prospective federal judge who had "argued that the government had a duty to prevent disease and starvation."

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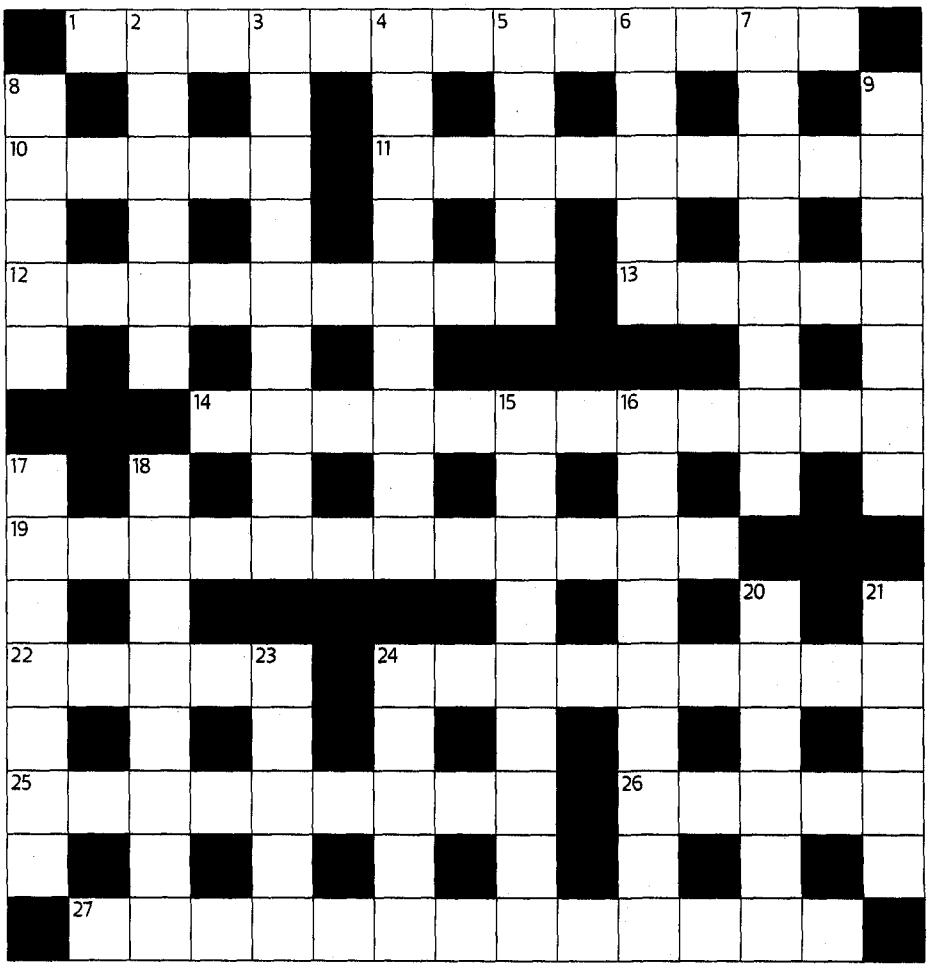

ACROSS

1 Although one finds Jackson capital, the little girl is going to have a little drink, with a bad pain. (13)

10 What one may use for getting around in the Andes, possibly. (5)

11 The driver may like you to have it and demand something from you to get food. (5,4)

12 Not the one Sam Walter Foss wanted to live beside, since it's more of a nightclub. (9)

13 Being rather difficult, it has a point that gets listened to. (5)

14 More than England, where battering air is difficult? (5,7)

19 The peg may be—with trouble let loose for the important religious man to possess. (8,4)

22 Tear something to bits, with grave words perhaps not going down well. (3,2)

24 You can't say you don't mind being subject to it. (9)

25 Ah, the full sort! It's good for you... (9)

26 ...perhaps even perfect! (It could be said at table!) (5)

27 When attacked, the pioneers might do this in a circle—but suburbanites have them, too. (7,6)

DOWN

2 Unless from someplace like Calcutta, that's the way the nickel might be headed. (6)

3 What's on the beach sort of hurts British officers made there. (9)

4 Think about a possible way to make money? (9)

5 Rather senseless in one quarter! (5)

6 A slang term for a bit of trouble, he said, for Brer Rabbit! (5)

7 A piece of cloth comes up once and again, like Chinese gelatin! (4-4)

8 Where one is bound to take a lot of interest in his work? (5)

9 and **21** They might be ringers involved with the matchmaking. (7,5)

15 One of those that usually get a strange connotation is badly fed, surrounded by a roar. (9)

16 See 23

17 This is dark, somewhat timid and has an internal blemish. (7)

18 Common rhubarb at the sort of bakery? (3-5)

20 One who's gonna-be, one after another, by the sound of it. (6)

21 See 9

23 and **16** The cautious partner to a deal might make this demand, and the scribe does. (3,2,2,7)

24 Glück attached this to Eurydice, being a point in a dilapidated roof. (5)

PUZZLED? No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules" send for those of Mr. Lewis to: Puzzled, *The Nation*, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003 or access our website at www.thenation.com/about/crossword.

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M		R		L		I		A		R		L		D
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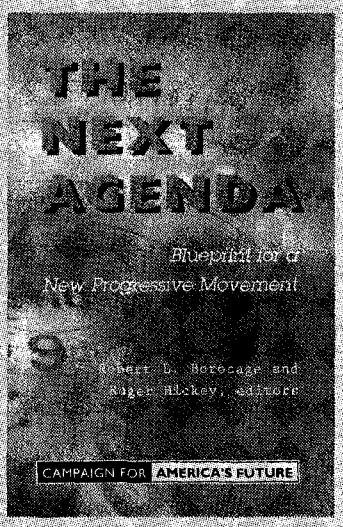

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